

Israeli police dismantle Jerusalem protest tent

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli police Wednesday dismantled a Palestinian protest tent near a house taken over by extremist rightwing Jewish settlers a month ago in the Ras Al Amoud neighbourhood of Arab east Jerusalem, police said. Police said they found three Palestinians in the tent, detained them for questioning and then released them. Faisal Hussaini, the top Palestinian official in Jerusalem, set up the tent to draw attention to three settler families who moved into the house in Ras Al Amoud, an Arab quarter in east Jerusalem, on Sept. 14. The Israeli government later persuaded Jewish-American millionaire Irving Moskowitz, who said he legally bought the house, to replace the families with 10 rightwing religious students.

Freak buffalo born in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — A freak buffalo born in Egypt and seen in a zoo in the northern province of Daqahliya, government news agency Ahram reported. The buffalo, which was very large and had a very long neck, was born in the province of Daqahliya, about 100 km from Cairo. It was found by a local farmer and taken to a zoo in the province. The buffalo is now being kept in a zoo in the province of Daqahliya.

66-year-old Israeli caught cheating on driver's licence exam

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A 66-year-old Israeli man was caught cheating on his driver's licence exam. The man, who was 66 years old, was caught cheating on his driver's licence exam. He was caught cheating on his driver's licence exam.

Jagger's sore-throat hinders MTV premiere

NEW YORK (AFP) — Mick Jagger's sore throat hinders the MTV premiere of his new album. Jagger's sore throat hinders the MTV premiere of his new album. Jagger's sore throat hinders the MTV premiere of his new album.

Karlhoff was not a special effects

NEW YORK (AFP) — Karlhoff was not a special effects actor. Karlhoff was not a special effects actor. Karlhoff was not a special effects actor.

Showgirls will focus on music instead of sex

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Prince Mohammad sworn in as Regent

AMMAN (Petra) — Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath left on a short visit to Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. Their Royal Highnesses were seen off at Amman International Airport by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the Regent, Prince Abdullah, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid as well as other senior civilian and military officials. Prince Mohammad was sworn in as Regent before Prince Hassan and the Cabinet members.

RJ steward sustains fractures in Sri Lanka bombing

AMMAN (Petra) — Acting Minister of State for Information Affairs Nasser Lawzi said Wednesday that a Jordanian steward on a Royal Jordanian (RJ) plane, Maher Abu Fiddah, sustained fractures in his leg resulting from an explosion that took place Wednesday morning in Faldadi Hotel in Sri Lanka. Mr. Lawzi said the RJ crew which includes eight persons were staying at a hotel adjacent to the Faldadi Hotel where the bombing occurred. The RJ Executive President Nader Dahabi talked to the crew and was assured of their good health and that they will return home Thursday.

Arafat in very good health — Mubarak

BENI SUEF (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Wednesday gave his Palestinian counterpart Yasser Arafat a clean bill of health saying reports he was sick were mere propaganda. "We have a medical report here in Egypt which said that his health is very good," Mr. Mubarak told reporters who asked him if he had noticed anything wrong with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) president during their recent meetings. "It's propaganda against Mr. Arafat" to say that his health is failing.

Canadian envoy returns to Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Canada's ambassador to Israel, David Berger, returned to the Jewish state Wednesday two weeks after being recalled over the use of false Canadian passports by two Israeli Mossad agents, officials said. Two Israeli intelligence agents using Canadian passports attempted to poison a Hamas leader, Khaled Misha'al, in Amman on Sept. 25.

Israel delays demolitions to hear appeals

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel said Wednesday it was delaying punitive measures against the families of four Hamas militants from a West Bank village whose suicide bombings killed 21 Israelis this summer. An army spokeswoman said the families had appealed the decision to seal or demolish their homes in Asira Al Shamalia village near Nablus and no action would be taken until the appeals were heard. "Objections were issued. Until a decision is made nothing will be done to the homes," the spokeswoman said. Israeli authorities said last month they had identified four of the five bombers who carried out the Jerusalem bombings in late July and early September as residents of Asira Al Shamalia. The army said Monday it would demolish or seal the homes.

Israel, Palestinians positive on code of conduct — Moratinos

TUNIS (R) — The European Union's (EU) Middle East envoy says Israel and the Palestinians have reacted positively to an EU-proposed code of conduct on the peace process. "Israel had a positive reaction in principle. They want to make some amendments, but they didn't reject it," Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy had defended the idea of a code of conduct, Miguel-Angel Moratinos told reporters Tuesday night. "Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) political department head

Farouk Khaddoumi also reacted positively," said Mr. Moratinos, who met Mr. Khaddoumi in Tunis. The EU envoy was speaking after a meeting with Tunisian Foreign Affairs Minister Said Ben Mustafa and Defence Minister Habib Ben Yahia. "Tunisia found the EU proposal very serious and very positive," Mr. Moratinos said. He was scheduled to meet Prime Minister Hamed Karoui Wednesday. The code of conduct, approved by EU foreign ministers earlier this month, proposes that both

sides safeguard what has already been achieved in the peace process, introduce confidence measures in the fight against terrorism and abstain from unilateral measures harming the peace process. Mr. Moratinos said it was a possible framework for Israeli-Palestinian talks on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. "We are trying to establish a diplomatic framework that will [allow] no excuse for the parties to stop the negotiations as in the past," he said. He said the code also

proposed the establishment of a "permanent security committee." "The idea of a permanent security committee has a great chance to be accepted by the two parties," Mr. Moratinos said. The proposed committee would comprise the Israelis and Palestinians. If they agreed, they might also allow EU and U.S. representatives to join them. Mr. Moratinos said he planned to visit Morocco Thursday for a meeting with King Hassan.

Israel called off previous plans to kill Misha'al in Turkey — press

Combined agency dispatches

A HAMAS political leader injured last month in a botched Mossad assassination had been targeted by the spy agency on other occasions, including an Islamist conference in Turkey last year, an Israeli newspaper reported Wednesday. Mossad agents injected Khaled Misha'al with a poisonous substance in the Sept. 25 attack in Amman. Israel army radio said Wednesday the liquid used was a strong synthetic opiate that disappeared without a trace. Mr. Misha'al

recovered after Israel provided an antidote. The Haaretz daily said the Mossad had originally planned to assassinate Mr. Misha'al in the summer of 1996 while the Hamas leader attended a conference of Islamist organisations in Turkey. The plan was dropped at the last minute amid concerns for Israeli-Turkish relations, the paper added. Haaretz said that there had been other plans to kill Mr. Misha'al but did not elaborate. An Israeli newspaper said Tuesday that before Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave the go-

ahead for the assassination attempt on Mr. Misha'al, a top Mossad agent warned the team picked for the hit was not ready for its mission. The official, whose name was not given, said they were not trained sufficiently and added that the operation had not been completely thought out, the daily Maariv said. The warning was reportedly the second sounded before the operation. A second high-level Mossad official said the complications of executing the hit in the Jordanian capital, Amman, had not been considered, Maariv added.

3 Islamists sentenced to death, 53 jailed for subversion in Egypt

HAEKSTEP (AP) — A military court on Wednesday sentenced three Islamists to death and 53 others including a British citizen to jail for planning assassinations, bombings and other subversive acts. A few of the accused murmured "Allahu Akbar," or God is Great, as the chief of the three-judge panel read out the verdict. Otherwise, the defendants stood calmly inside a massive steel cage, brought into an auditorium that was converted into a court-room for the mass trial of 87 suspects. The court acquitted 31 others. As the judges left after the six-minute session, many inside the cage yelled "Islam is the solution." Later, while being taken away in prison

trucks, they shouted "we will be victorious." Among the 53 sent to prison, two were jailed for life and the others got prison terms ranging from two years to 15 years of hard labour. In Egypt, conviction and sentencing are generally handed out simultaneously. The convicts can appeal the verdicts only to President Hosni Mubarak. One of those jailed for 10 years was Akram Sherif, an Egyptian who lived in Britain for 16 years and has a British passport. He was arrested along with the 86 others earlier this year and charged with collecting funds abroad for the Islamists. Such mass trials by military courts have been a common feature of the government's tough crackdown that has

sent scores of people to the death row and jailed hundreds. The militants have waged a campaign of violence since 1992 to try to overthrow Mr. Mubarak's secular government and replace it with strict Islamist rule. More than 1,100 people — mostly militants and policemen — have been killed. Wednesday's verdict was against members of the outlawed group, the Jihad, or holy war, which was responsible for the 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat, Mr. Mubarak's predecessor. The government says the group is now largely crushed as are other militant

(Continued on page 2)

15 NCP 'Stealth candidates' identified; nine central council members running as independents — research group

By Francesca Ciriaci Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Researchers at Al Urdun Al Jadid yesterday said they have pinpointed some of the "Stealth candidates" of the National Constitutional Party (NCP). The researchers, who compared the NCP members' list with the final list of registered candidates issued by governors in each electoral district, said they found at least 15 "independent" candidates who are either affiliated to or actively involved with the NCP. According to the researchers, nine of those 15 "independents" are members of the NCP central council. The pro-government NCP,

which announced in late September a list of 12 official candidates, has never denied the existence of a second list of so-called "Stealth candidates," named after the U.S. fighter plane that avoids radar detection. In a telephone interview with the Jordan Times yesterday, NCP Deputy Secretary General and Spokesperson Hakam Kheir confirmed his party's support to all its members running in the elections. Mr. Kheir, however, rejected the terminology commonly used by the press in dealing with the issue. "Rather than 'secret' list, it should be called 'unofficial list,'" he said. Addressing a press confer-

ence on the occasion of the announcement of the party's ticket, two weeks ago, NCP Secretary General Abdul Hadi Majali also confirmed that some NCP members could reveal themselves only after they won the elections. Mr. Majali then said that nothing prevented any winning candidate from joining the party's bloc in the 13th Parliament, provided he/she shares the party's platform. Election watchers offer various explanations for the phenomenon of unofficial candidates. They say that in districts where two or more prominent candidates from the same tribe are competing, the NCP prefers not to openly back up one or the other

because, if the chosen candidate is not elected, the party would lose the support of the winner. Al Urdun Al Jadid's list of Stealth candidates seems to confirm such theory, as it includes prominent former officials or deputies running against each other in the same district. In other cases, analysts say, some candidates prefer to run independently, and join the party's ranks only after reaching Parliament. One "Stealth candidate" told the Jordan Times that he was asked to run under the NCP ticket, but refused because he was worried of losing tribal votes if his name

(Continued on page 2)

Israeli foreign minister to visit Jordan — report

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy will visit Jordan next month after Jordanian parliamentary elections, Jordan's ambassador to Israel said according to Israeli Radio. Ambassador Omar Rifai said the invitation was extended to Mr. Levy after he criticised the failed Mossad spy service operation launched by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to murder Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al in Amman, the radio said. A Foreign Ministry spokesman said however he was not aware of Mr. Levy's plans to travel to Jordan.



CHECKING OUT THE LATEST ON WHEELS: His Majesty King Hussein looks at the latest Daimler on the Jaguar stand at the British Motor Show, Wednesday. The King is currently on a visit in the U.K. with Her Majesty Queen Noor (Reuters photo)

Aqsa shooter to be released, to return to U.S.

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel decided Tuesday to release a U.S.-born man serving a life sentence for killing two Palestinians after he agreed to move to the U.S. Prison authority spokeswoman Orli Harel said Alan Goodman will be free in the U.S. but must spend the next eight years there before he will be allowed back to Israel, according to a deal between Goodman's lawyer and the prison review board. On April 11, 1982, Goodman opened fire on Palestinians praying at Al Aqsa Mosque. The area is also holy to Jews as the site of the ancient temples. Goodman, who claimed he was trying to return the Al Aqsa to the Jewish people, killed two Palestinians and wounded nine. Spokeswoman Harel said a prison authority review board decided to shorten his life sentence retroactively and also release him on condition he leaves the country and returns to the U.S. Life terms in Israel generally translate to 24 years in prison, and the spokeswoman noted that Goodman already served two-thirds of that and would have eight years to go. "The review board decided to release at the end of the month, on condition that he spends [the remaining] eight years in the United States," she said.

EU-U.S. open talks on trade rift over Libya, Iran, Cuba

BRUSSELS (AP) — U.S. and European Union (EU) negotiators opened two days of talks Tuesday hoping to avoid a trade war over U.S. legislation punishing foreign firms doing business with Cuba, Iran and Libya. The negotiating teams were up against a Wednesday midnight deadline to overcome differences that have soured trans-Atlantic relations for months. The 15-nation EU had warned Washington that unless a favourable deal was brokered by Thursday, it could challenge the legislation at the World Trade Organisation. But the chief U.S. negotiator, assistant secretary

of state for economic and business affairs, Alan Larson, was hoping the talks could continue beyond Wednesday even if no agreement was reached at that stage. "We are prepared to continue to work on this not just up to the 15th but beyond the 15th," he said a few hours after the negotiations had started. EU trade spokesman Nigel Gardner said the talks would likely drag on into Wednesday night. "We are not expecting a substantial announcement on Tuesday," Mr. Gardner said. An EU official, who demanded anonymity, said the first session of talks Tuesday had shown

a "considerable gap" continued to divide the negotiators. The two sides are fighting over U.S. laws that seek to punish companies trading with the three countries, which Washington considers rogue states sponsoring terrorism. The issue came to a head late last month when the U.S. administration reacted angrily to French oil giant Total signing a \$2 billion contract to develop an Iranian natural gas field. Washington is investigating the deal under the U.S. Iran-Libya sanctions act, which may result in sanctions against the French company.

U.N. aid officials appeal for Kurd ceasefire in north Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — U.N. aid officials appealed Wednesday for a ceasefire between feuding Kurdish factions in northern Iraq and warned that the fighting could hamper food distribution and a children's polio vaccination programme. Dennis Halliday, who is in charge of implementation of the U.N. oil-for-food programme, travelled from Baghdad to the Kurdish-held north to call for a halt to the fighting. "The situation in northern Iraq continues to be of grave concern to the U.N.," since the clashes between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) erupted on Monday, said a U.N. spokesman. Eric Falt, spokesman for the coordinator of U.N. humanitarian operations, said the vaccination pro-

gramme was set for Oct. 18-20. "A suspension (of fighting) is very important for the health of children under five," he said. The dates can not be changed because "to be effective" the campaign is to be carried out simultaneously in Kurdish areas of neighbouring Turkey, Syria and Iran, he explained. The spokesman told a press conference that Mr. Halliday's visit was planned before the outbreak of fighting and was aimed at assessing the success of food distribution in the north under the oil-for-food accord. Sanctions-hit Iraq resumed limited oil exports in December to finance imports of food and medicine. The United Nations is in charge of distribution in the north, which is under Kurdish control in defiance of Baghdad.

The programme has so far not been disrupted, he said, although "many trucks used for food distribution in areas affected by the fighting have been now borrowed by the warring factions for military purposes." Mr. Falt said the fighting has also cut electricity supplies to the Kurdish city of Erbil, but the main towns of Iraqi Kurdistan have so far been spared in the KDP-PUK clashes to the northeast toward the Iranian border. Movement of U.N. personnel in much of Erbil governorate has, however, been restricted, he said. Mr. Falt said the United Nations had "received reports that sympathisers of both factions are being expelled" and appealed for them to prevent the creation of more displaced persons within Iraqi Kurdistan.

Kurd rebels threaten economic warfare

TUNCALI (R) — Kurdish guerrillas have threatened to attack economic targets and kill public employees in their campaign for self-rule in southeastern Turkey. Top Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) commander Semdin Sakik told the MED-TV Kurdish television station in a taped interview shown Tuesday night that the rebels would bomb the energy, textile and transport sectors. "We will attack energy transmission lines all over

Turkey, bridges, factories, airports, oil and gas installations and textile factories in (the southern area of) Cukurova," he said. "We will attack every sector that provides money for the treasury," he said. The guerrillas have only partially carried out previous threats of economic warfare on Turkey. Mr. Sakik, also known as "Fingerless Zeki," said the guerrillas would target leading bureaucrats and civil servants as well as the families of high-rank-

ing military officers. "Civilians might die because only guns can speak when the bullets are being fired," said Mr. Sakik, the PKK's number two who has a reputation for ferocity. More than 27,000 people have been killed in the 13 years of conflict. Turkish troops have been slowly pulling out of northern Iraq this week after a month-long operation against PKK bases there.

Sheikh Yassin condemns killing civilians, rules out joining PNA

Combined agency dispatches

HAMAS FOUNDER Sheikh Ahmad Yassin has in remarks published Monday condemned the killing of civilians in Israel by his group.

Sheikh Yassin also said Hamas can coexist with the Jews. His comments were made during an interview published in the London-based Arabic weekly, *Al Wasat*.

Asked to comment on Hamas operations that sometimes kill civilians, Sheikh Yassin said: "We are a people who condemn the killing of civilians. We don't see this [killing of civilians] as a good thing."

"The civilians must be spared in the conflict," Sheikh Yassin, who is also Hamas' spiritual leader, said in the telephone interview from his home in the Gaza Strip.

The criticism is unusual for a Hamas leader, given that the group has claimed responsibility for the two

Jerusalem suicide bombings in July and September that killed 21 Israelis.

Sheikh Yassin, however, said, Israel should avoid targeting civilians first, and "we will then be the first to do the same."

"Why are they demolishing the houses of civilians and displacing women and children? Why are they putting in jail civilians who have committed no crime? Why are they confiscating the lands and properties of civilians? Why are they strangling the people and leaving them without food or water?" he said.

Sheikh Yassin was released earlier this month by Israel after serving eight years of a life sentence for ordering the killings of Israelis and Palestinian collaborators during the Palestinian uprising.

Sheikh Yassin returned to his home in the Gaza Strip last Monday as part of a swap following the Israeli assassination attempt in Jordan on Hamas leader Khalid Misha'al.

Asked to comment on Hamas' call for the destruction of Israel, Sheikh Yassin said "the Hamas movement wants to regain its right, territory and home... we don't hate the Jews. We are seeking our right and we want to live like others live."

Asked whether this signalled a change in his position, Sheikh Yassin was quoted as saying: "We can live with the Jews because they belong to a religion. We don't attack those who belong to religions. We respect them."

In another interview with the United Arab Emirates daily *Al Itihad*, Sheikh Yassin said Hamas will never join the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) because it is opposed to the autonomy accord with Israel.

Sheikh Yassin said his Hamas would remain an opposition group.

"It is not possible [to join] because we see the PNA as an outcome of the Oslo (autonomy) agreement, which we believe has failed

to achieve the rights of the Palestinian people," he told the newspaper.

"We will not participate in an authority which has committed itself to implementing that agreement. In all countries, there is an authority and an opposition and we are an opposition."

Sheikh Yassin said Hamas, which has carried out a series of deadly anti-Israeli suicide bombings, would pursue its attacks until Israel withdraws from all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

He repeated an offer for a ceasefire but stressed Israel must quit Palestinian land, including east Jerusalem, free all prisoners, remove Jewish settlements and provide a safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

"Israel must also stop interfering in our affairs and allow us complete control over our borders and outlets with Arab states," he said. "If Israel does all this, then we will stop our military attacks for a period of time."



CHILDREN PROTEST: Two Palestinians wearing an outfit that resembles a prison with chains in their hands head a children's march on Wednesday in occupied Jerusalem. The children's father is held in an Israeli jail for an anti-Israeli attack. Scores of Palestinian children as well as children from Italy, Sweden and the United States participated in this festival (AFP photo)

Israelis accused of trying to blackmail Egyptian envoy

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli belly dancer and a male friend are being investigated over allegations they tried to blackmail Egypt's ambassador to Israel by accusing him of rape, judicial officials said Wednesday.

Mohammad Bassiouny accused the woman and her friend of blackmail after she lodged a rape complaint against the veteran ambassador two months ago, Israeli radio reported.

An Israeli court lifted a censorship order on the affair Wednesday after the rape case against Mr. Bassiouny was dropped and another

investigation opened into his allegations against the couple, the radio reported.

The two were released last week on bail pending possible charges, it said.

Police had investigated the complaint by the woman, from the Tel Aviv area, and passed the case on to Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein who decided there was not enough evidence to press charges against Mr. Bassiouny.

Last month Mr. Bassiouny accused Israeli officials of a campaign of harassment after guards at the Egyptian border searched his car and

authorities allowed a protest outside his residence.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak complained to the Israeli government about the incidents.

Israeli President Ezer Weizman said he regretted that "certain elements in Israel... wanted to do [Bassiouny] harm."

Mr. Weizman said his door was always open to Mr. Bassiouny, adding that both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister David Levy had spoken to the ambassador over his complaints.

Khartoum bans newspaper lottery draws as anti-Islamic

KHARTOUM (AP) — The Sudanese government has banned newspaper-market lotteries, branding them anti-Islamic, a newspaper reported here Wednesday.

Lotteries "go against the Islamic orientation of the nation," said justice ministry's fatwa, or an Islamic edict, published in the daily newspaper *Akhbar Alyoun*.

One of the companies that has been publishing the lottery coupons is the government-owned Sudan Free Zones and Markets Corporation.

The fatwa stated that lotteries amounted to gambling and ordered all media companies "to halt such publicity immediately."

For the past few months, newspapers — particularly sports dailies and magazines — have taken to publishing lottery coupons to boost both circulation and advertising revenue.

Scores of companies, often biscuit manufacturers, have been running lotteries in the press in the past few months, offering cars or six-figure amounts of money.

The ministry acted on the recommendation of a group of Islamic scholars who included the professor of Islamic Sharia law at Khartoum University, the vice chancellor of the city's Holy Koran University, and the deputy vice chancellor of Omdurman Islamic University.

Sudan's military-backed Islamic government is heavily influenced by the National Islamic Front whose leader, parliamentary speaker Hassan Turabi, is regarded as the key policy-maker.

Jordan, Israel work on 'damage control'

From The Jerusalem Post

JORDANIAN AMBASSADOR Omar Rifa'i Tuesday conferred with Foreign Ministry Director General Eitan Bentsur on ways to put Israeli-Jordanian relations back on track after the bungled Mossad operation in Amman. They also discussed various joint economic projects.

Mr. Rifa'i said he has received numerous expressions of support from rank-and-file Israelis who expressed friendship for King Hussein and the people of Jordan.

Mr. Bentsur also met the Palestinian side of the Oslo-initiated committee on people-to-people relations, headed by Sufian Abu Zaide, and discussed programmes

designed to generate amity between Israelis and Palestinians at the grassroots level.

In another development, Canadian Ambassador David Berger delayed his scheduled return by 24 hours because of an eye infection. He was expected to arrive Wednesday. Mr. Berger was recalled Oct. 4 in protest against the botched Mossad operation in Amman last month in which forged Canadian passports were used.

The IDF also hosted Jordanian military officers Tuesday. The IDF spokesman said a group of Jordanian commanders had spent the past two days in Israel discussing "topics of mutual interest and the continuation of military cooperation between the Israeli and Jordanian armies."

3 Islamists sentenced to death, 53 jailed for subversion in Egypt

(Continued from page 1)

organisations. But sporadic attacks continue.

Two of the three sentenced to death Wednesday were tried in absentia and remain at large. The Islamist in custody, Adel Ali Bayoumi Al Sudani, 41, is the head of the group's military wing.

According to the formal prosecution statement in court, all three were charged with "using force, terror and threats."

They also were accused of

"revolting against the government and forming groups that carry out the assassination of security personnel, public figures and bombings of economic installations."

The charges did not name specific targets.

The trial was closed to the public, including the families of the defendants, and about 60 women and children with lunch packets waited on the steps of the auditorium, located in the town of Haekestep, 40 kilometres northeast of Cairo.

Military police prevented reporters from talking to the convicts.

"This is like a cinema, all lies and more lies," said Haja Amani, whose son was one of the defendants.

Last month, another military court sentenced four militants to death, eight to life imprisonment and 60 others to jail terms. They were among 97 people tried for being part of the Islamic group, the most powerful Islamist organisation in Egypt.

15 NCP 'Stealth candidates' identified

(Continued from page 1)

was linked to any specific party.

"If I won as an independent in the last elections, chances are that I might win again with the same formula," the 12th Parliament deputy said.

In other cases, a Stealth candidate could be competing against a declared NCP candidate in order to ensure that at least one of the two wins.

The Stealth candidates identified by Al Urdum Al Jadid include: Amjad Majali and Mansour Ben Tareef (Karak), Hashem Dabbas

(Balqa), Ahmad, Hani and Fahad Qudab (Ajloun), Samir Qawar (Balqa), Mohammad Thweib (Amman's 2nd District), Mohammad Huneiti, Barjes Hadeed and Hamad Abu Zeid (Amman's 4th District), Miffleh Rubeimi (Jerash), Aysna Khawja Razem (Amman's 1st District), No'man Ghweiri (Zarqa), and Osama Maigawi (Ramtha and Bani Kinaneh).

Meanwhile, Mr. Khair announced also yesterday the appointment of Ghaleb Abu Jaber and Badri Mulki as NCP Higher Steering Committee chairman and vice-president, respectively.

The two were appointed yesterday during a committee meeting chaired by NCP Secretary General Majali.

The appointments came as a result of the resignation three weeks ago of former president of the Higher Steering Committee, Akif Fayed.

Mr. Fayed was the most prominent among around one hundred NCP members and leaders who resigned from the party in the last four weeks. The resignees lamented "tyranny and lack of democracy in the party's decision-making process."

U.S. authorities endangering life of Islamist leader

CAIRO (AFP) — U.S. prison authorities are "cruelly" endangering the life of the spiritual guide of Egypt's main Islamist group who is serving a life sentence in the United States, his U.S. lawyer claimed. Ramsey Clark, in a letter to warden Pat Keohane of the U.S. Federal Prison Hospital in Springfield, Missouri, charged that repeated calls to improve detention conditions for Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman have been ignored. "Despite urgent pleas you have failed to take a single step to protect the health and life of Dr. Abdul Rahman," Mr. Clark said in the letter, a copy of which was received in Cairo by Agence France Presse on Wednesday. "His present condition, particularly his diabetes, is life threatening and deteriorating," said Mr. Clark, a former U.S. attorney general.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
14:10...New Kids on the Block
14:30...My Little Fairy Tale
15:00...America's Funniest People
15:30...He Shoots He Scores
16:00...I Love Lucy
16:30...The Boy From Andromeda
17:00...French Programmes
19:00...News in French
19:15...French Programmes
19:30...News Headlines
19:35...Trivial Pursuit
20:00...Parent Hunt
20:30...Lois and Clark — Superman
21:10...Oprah Winfrey Show
22:00...News in English
22:30...Feature Film
23:59...End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:18...Fajr
05:35...Sunrise/Duha
11:21...Dhuhr
14:36...Asr
17:07...Maghreb
18:24...Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

there will be a gradual drop in temperatures. In Aqaba, it will be hot and occasional dusty, winds southerly moderate, and seas choppy.

AMMAN:
Dr. Issam Al-Azmar...890504
Dr. Nidal Al-Azmar...751672
Dr. Khalid Klob...816155
Dr. Osama Al-Husseini...847289
Firas pharmacy...661912
Ferdows pharmacy...778336
Al Asema pharmacy...637055
Nairokh pharmacy...623672
Yacoub pharmacy...649495
Shmeisani pharmacy...637660
Najib pharmacy...847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh...250080
Al Quds pharmacy...—
ZARQA:
Dr. Hafez Salifu...914144

Khalifeh pharmacy...985417

53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre...637111
Civil Defence Department...661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue...630341
Civil Defence Emergency...199
Rescue Police 192...621111, 637777
Fire Brigade...617101
Blood Bank...775121
Highway Police...843402
Traffic Police...896390
Public Security Department...630321
Hotel Complaints...605800
Price Complaints...661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints...897467
Amman Municipality Complaints...787111
Telephone Information (direct assistance)...121
Overseas Calls...010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs...623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs...661101
Jordan Television...773111
Radio Jordan...774111
Water Authority...680100
Jordan Electricity Authority...815615
Electric Power Company...636381
RJ Flight Information 08-

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre...813813/32
Khalidi Maternity...642311/6
Akileh Maternity...642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity...642362
Mallat, J. Amman...636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital...669131
University Hospital...845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital...667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali...664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen...777101/3
Al-Bashir...775111/26
Army, Marka...891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital...60240/50
Amal Hospital...674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery...865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital...09983323
Zarqa National Hospital...09900560
Ibn Sina Hospital...09986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital...09990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital

021275555

Greek Catholic Hospital

021272275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital

021247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital

03314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA

INTERNATIONAL

AIRPORT

This information is supplied by

Royal Jordanian (RJ) information

department at the Queen

Alia International Airport Tel.

(08)53200 where it should

always be verified.

Information on other flights are

supplied on phone 08 (52700) or

08 (53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:05...Sanaa (RJ)
08:45...New Delhi (RJ)
09:05...Dhahran Riyadh (RJ)
09:05...Bombay (RJ)
09:25...Beirut (RJ)
09:40...Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
09:45...Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:00...Colombo (RJ)
14:15...Kuwait (RJ)
16:05...Moscow (RJ)
18:00...Jeddah (add) (RJ)
18:10...Athens (RJ)
18:15...London, Aqaba (RJ)

11:15...Amsterdam, Montreal,

Toronto (RJ)

11:20...Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)

12:20...Athens (RJ)

12:25...London (RJ)

12:30...Jeddah (add) (RJ)

19:45...Abu Dhabi, Kuala

Lumpur (add) (RJ)

20:10...Cairo (RJ)

20:20...Larancia (RJ)

20:40...Jeddah (RJ)

21:00...Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

21:25...Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights

07:50...Medan (EK)

12:00...Riyadh (SV)

12:55...Doha (GF)

13:30...Al 'Arish (PF)

13:40...Sharjah (AH)

15:00...Rome (AZ)

18:00...Dubai (EK)

18:50...Tel Aviv (LY)

20:00...Cairo (MS)

20:10...Beirut (ME)

23:20...Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)

04:40...London (BA)

08:00...Dubai (EK)

Royal Wings (RW)

(For Thursday and Friday)

07:45...Aqaba (RW)

09:05...Amman (QAIA) (RW)

09:50...Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

17:20...Tel Aviv (RW)

18:30...Amman (QAIA) (RW)

21:20...Aqaba (RW)

22:50...Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

05:45...Beirut (RJ)

06:20...Moscow (RJ)

08:40...Kuwait (RJ)

10:35...Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)

11:00...Aqaba, Paris (RJ)

11:10...Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)

11:15...Amsterdam, Montreal,

Toronto (RJ)

11:20...Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)

12:20...Athens (RJ)

12:25...London (RJ)

12:30...Jeddah (add) (RJ)

19:45...Abu Dhabi, Kuala

Lumpur (add) (RJ)

20:10...Cairo (RJ)

20:20...Larancia (RJ)

20:40...Jeddah (RJ)

21:00...Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

21:25...Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights

03:00...Athens (OA)

05:15...Istanbul (TK)

07:45...Beirut (ME)

08:10...London (BA)

09:00...Amsterdam (GA)

13:30...Riyadh (SV)

13:45...Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)

14:30...Annaba (Algeria) (AH)

16:00...Rome (AZ)

19:00...Damascus, Dubai (EK)

20:10...Tel Aviv (LY)

Human rights society urges action ensuring food availability, security

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Society for Human Rights (JSHR) Wednesday urged the government to adopt plans and take practical steps toward ensuring food security for the Jordanian people and to tighten controls on foodstuffs offered to consumers.

Issued on the eve of World Food Day (WFD) on Oct. 16, a JSHR statement noted the following points: * JSHR is concerned about the food security situation in the Kingdom, in view of decreased agricultural production and increased dependence on imported foodstuffs. The group calls for immediate action to address this imbalance.

* JSHR notes that poverty has been spreading and it is estimated that one-third of the population lives at or under the poverty line, according to statistics from the Ministry of Social Development. Due to low income and the continual rise in food prices, many families do not get sufficient food, which results in malnutrition and poor health.

* The government's food policies are not based on sound principles and rules.

The public continues to hear reports on the seizure of thousands of tonnes of food unfit for human consumption by health authorities, and the closure of restaurants, food stores, and poultry farms for violation of public health safety rules. These are measures that JSHR encourages, but little is being done to control imported food, as is shown in the recent discovery of worms in imported fish and bad milk products.

The statement noted with regret that the government's promises to introduce a draft law on food have not been honoured and obstacles are continually placed in the path of the Jordanian Consumer Society's work.

The statement appealed to the government to end its indifference to the dangerous situation posed to the nation, stating that the state should:

* Take responsibility for providing sufficient quantities of safe food.

* Subject all food policies to a parliamentary committee's decisions.

* Take measures to increase food production.

* Introduce and apply a food law in Parliament.

* Impose heavy deterrent

penalties on the violators of the food law.

In observance of WFD, Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha said Jordan has been exerting efforts to increase food production, though almost 90 per cent of the Kingdom's lands are semi-desert and only five per cent of the remaining land is suitable for crop cultivation.

Despite the obstacles and the limited water supplies, Jordan has achieved self-sufficiency in vegetables, fruits, poultry, and eggs, and has recently increased its production of red meat and milk, according to the minister.

Many of these agricultural products are exported to Arab and foreign countries, he noted.

The Kingdom is still struggling to bridge a large gap in the production of field crops, animal feed, and grain, he said.

The Ministry of Agriculture's plans to increase food production and the involvement of the private sector are expected to help Jordan become self-sufficient in most necessary foodstuffs, Mr. Khreisha stated.

The U.N. Economic and Social Commission for

Western Asia (ESCWA) issued a statement to mark WFD, which read:

"Defeating hunger does not depend simply on producing more food. The only sustainable way to achieve food security for the poor is by increasing their access to food. This can be done, for example, by making appropriate agricultural technologies available to poor farmers, improving the rural poor's access to credit for agriculture, investing in productive assets like small-scale irrigation systems that benefit small farmers, improving health and primary education, especially for girls, and ensuring that the poor are able to participate in the planning of development programmes."

"This year's WFD activities, with the theme 'Investing in Food Security,' will provide the opportunity to focus on the policies, programmes, and actions undertaken or planned by governments and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in partnership with all members of civil society and the international community."

Prime minister emphasises Kingdom's pan-Arab role

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday emphasised Jordan's continued endeavours to bolster ties with Arab countries at all levels and the Kingdom's continued drive to enhance collective Arab action vis-à-vis all matters of national interest.

In a lecture delivered at the Royal Jordanian War College, Dr. Majali said Jordan is pursuing a policy in support of all Arab League institutions and various league activities in line with the principles of the Great Arab Revolt, which aimed at unifying the Arabs.

Those principles motivated HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, to create the Arab Thought Forum, a platform enabling Arab intellectuals to discuss pan-Arab issues freely, he said.

Jordan, he said, believes that relations with other countries should be based on the principles of justice, freedom, and mutual

respect of sovereignty and the exchange of interests, and has been maintaining balanced relations with all countries.

Due to its spiritual and religious links with the Islamic World, Jordan is committed to enhancing cultural, economic, and political relations, according to Dr. Majali, who noted that His Majesty King Hussein has directed the government to create the Al al Bayt Foundation to allow Islamic scholars to work together for the benefit of Muslims everywhere.

Referring to foreign relations, the prime minister said the Kingdom respects and remains committed to international treaties and conventions and is an active member in the implementation of various international agreements, including those guaranteeing the rights of women and children, prohibiting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and concerning the protection of the environment.

Not only is Jordan dedicated to strengthening its ties with various nations, including the major powers, but it has also been an active member of several U.N. organisations, according to Dr. Majali.

Jordan has carefully been steering away from the policy of polarisation, and has been trying to ensure friendly relations, especially with nations neighbouring the Arab World, he said.

On the Palestinian problem, Dr. Majali said Jordan continues to support the Palestinian people's struggle to regain their rights and has been dedicated to helping them over the past 70 years.

Jordan has enabled the Palestinians to enter peace negotiations to assume the responsibility for determining their own future, he said.

Stressing the strategic nature of Jordanian-Palestinian relations, Dr. Majali said the special relationship between the two sides takes priority over other matters, despite occasional difficulties.

Referring to the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty, he said it has secured the country's international boundaries, ended Israel's ambitions for Jordanian land and water resources, and buried forever the Israeli idea of Jordan being the substitute Palestinian homeland.

His Majesty King Hussein has been committed to strengthening the Jordan Armed Forces and has succeeded in making the military a model for other Arab countries, the prime minister said.

In addition to protecting the homeland, he said the armed forces, which have participated in peace-keeping missions around the world, are playing an active role in the development of the country.

Man accused of 'honour' killing of wife, children goes on trial

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A 40-year-old man accused of killing his wife and four of his six children in Karak in May Wednesday pleaded not guilty to the charges in front of the Criminal Court at his opening trial.

Awad Mohammad reportedly opened fire on his family shortly after midnight on May 13, killing his 35-year-old wife Samar Salah, and his children Ahmad, seven, Basma, six, Sahar, one, and Ibrahim, four months.

At the beginning of the court session, Mr. Mohammad's attorney asked the court to transfer his client to mental health experts for examination "because my client's mother and a close relative were treated for mental problems in the past."

The court tribunal, which was presided over by Judge Mohammad Ajameh and included Judges Mifteh Mobeidin and Issa Hamdan, rejected the attorney's request and ordered that the session proceed as normal.

"It is obvious to our court that the defendant does not seem to suffer from any mental disorders, and we see no need to transfer him to a mental institute," Judge Ajameh said.

The court heard two witnesses Wednesday, including Mr. Mohammad's relative Ali Salem, who told the court that on the night of the murder the defendant came to his house in Karak and informed him that he killed his wife and children.

"He told me that he shot and killed his family, and that if he had more bullets

left in his gun, he would have shot himself as well," the 44-year-old witness told the court.

Mr. Mohammad was quoted by officials as claiming that he killed his wife and children to cleanse his family's "honour," because he suspected that his wife had a relation with another man and that his children were not his.

The defendant faces five counts of premeditated murder and two counts of attempted murder, which were brought against him by Criminal Prosecutor Saleh Lawzi.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, the suspect, who married Ms. Salah in 1987, plotted to kill her and his children in mid-1996 to cleanse his "honour," and bought a gun for this purpose.

On the night of the incident, Mr. Mohammad

locked his wife and six children in his house, drew a gun, and opened fire at his family. When he ran out of ammunition, he brought a kitchen knife and stabbed the rest, according to the charge sheet.

The two children who survived the shooting incident were Rasha, four, who suffered from knife and bullet injuries, and Nermeen, eight, who hid in her bedroom closet.

After the incident, relatives and family members said Mr. Mohammad had suffered from financial problems, and "that was the reason he killed his family."

The court tribunal adjourned the session until Oct. 20 to hear more prosecution witnesses in the case.

Three more parliamentary candidacies rejected, bringing total number to 13

AMMAN (J.T.) — Three more candidacies were rejected for falling short of the requirements stipulated by the Elections Law, according to Arabic press reports Wednesday.

Quoting sources at various administrative governors' offices, the reports listed the candidacies of Yehia Oteibi (Zarqa), Adeb Farah (Irbid), and Hatem Salameh (Balqa) as the three rejected.

Mr. Oteibi was reportedly found ineligible under Article 20 of the 1986 Elections Law, which forbids public sector employees to run for Parliament and sets the conditions for their resignations from their posts in order to become eligible.

As for the other two rejected

candidacies, the reports simply stated "legal reasons" without elaborating.

Ten candidacies were rejected earlier this week. The would-be candidates who were not in compliance with the requirements stipulated by the law are Jamal Abu Yahia and Nayel Wada'an Da'jeh (Amman First District), Ahmad Shami (Amman Third District), Dahoud Daradkeh, Jamal Ensour, and Sa'oud Zubeidi (Amman Fifth District), Deifallah Ziben (Central Bedouins), and Issam Suleiman and Wafiq Naddaq (Zarqa).

One candidacy was also rejected in Salt, but the candidate's name was not revealed.

According to an Arabic press report, Mr. Zubeidi's candidacy was rejected because the name stated in the application did not match the name appearing on the documents produced with it.

Article 18 of the elections law lists the conditions for membership in the 80-seat Lower House as follows: Jordanian nationality, registration in the final electoral lists, and 30 years of age.

The same article also states that would-be candidates should not have been sentenced to "a prison term exceeding one year for a non-political crime" and that they cannot have been convicted for a moral felony or misdemeanour.

Candidacies can also be rejected if the would-be candidate belongs to an unlawful

organisation, if he/she has "any material interests in any of the government's departments," and if he/she "is a relative of the King to a degree specified by special legislation."

The candidates whose applications were rejected can, according to the law, appeal before the Court of First Instance.

In addition, the law grants voters the right to object to any candidacy in their district before the Higher Court of Justice.

A total of 561 candidates, including 17 women, registered between Oct. 10-13.

Elections for the Kingdom's 13th Parliament, the third since the re-launching of the democratisation process in 1989, are scheduled for Nov. 4.

Analysts predict only 3 women will win in elections

with basic services."

He used 1989 as an example. Voters then were able to vote for more than one candidate, but "still none of the 12 women who ran for Parliament were elected."

Mr. Sabbagh said women's chances are limited, not because they are women, but "because people believe that male deputies can deliver."

"They can use their positions to help employ people, bail people out of prisons, attend weddings and funerals, etc., functions that women cannot perform at this time."

In addition, Mr. Sabbagh said women, especially in rural areas, do not vote for women, but follow the choice of their men folk, and "most tribes want a male member in Parliament that can serve their interests."

During the past two months, more than 35 women expressed their intent to run for Parliament, but only half of this number showed up at registration offices last

Analysts predict only 3 women will win in elections

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Out of the Kingdom's 17 women candidates running in the 1997 Parliamentary elections, only three might make it to the House, according to analysts and election watchers.

Taleb Awad, who researched and documented the past two elections, said that despite the large number of women running for the 13th Parliament in comparison to previous years, the possibility that any of them will win a seat is low.

Dr. Awad, a researcher at Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Centre, attributes this to the absence of a women's quota in Parliament, tribalism, the lack of unity among women's organisations, and the one-person, one-vote system.

"I believe that women running for the minority seats (Hiam Kalimat and Toujan and Laila Faisal for the Circassian seat) and those supported by political parties (Emily Naffa' of the Jordan's Communist Party and Da'ad Tamimi of the National Constitutional Party) will have the best chances," he said.

However, Tony Sabbagh, an independent research consultant, disagrees. He said the one-person, one-vote system "is not the problem, but rather the change in concept among people that the deputy's main function is to provide them

with basic services."

He used 1989 as an example. Voters then were able to vote for more than one candidate, but "still none of the 12 women who ran for Parliament were elected."

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"They can use their positions to help employ people, bail people out of prisons, attend weddings and funerals, etc., functions that women cannot perform at this time."

In addition, Mr. Sabbagh said women, especially in rural areas, do not vote for women, but follow the choice of their men folk, and "most tribes want a male member in Parliament that can serve their interests."

During the past two months, more than 35 women expressed their intent to run for Parliament, but only half of this number showed up at registration offices last

week.

"This high registration turnout represents a 33 per cent increase over 1989 and a 433 per cent increase over the 1993 elections, but this is due to an increase in women's activities in preparation for this year's elections," Dr. Awad said.

In 1989, none of the 12 women who ran for Parliament succeeded in winning a seat.

The discouraging results of 1993, according to the analysts, led only three women to run in the 1993 campaign. One woman, Toujan Faisal, secured enough votes to clinch the Circassian seat for the Third District.

Ziyad Abu Ghaneimeh, an Islamist who led the Islamic Action Front election campaign in 1993, echoed Dr. Awad and Mr. Sabbagh's analysis, but added that the opposition parties' boycott of the elections also played a factor.

"Some opposition and political parties, including the Islamic Action Front, intended to nominate women, who would have had better chances," Mr. Abu Ghaneimeh said.

He said that might negatively affect former Deputy Toujan Faisal, "who is going to lose the votes of the opposition and political party supporters."

In other districts, Mr. Abu Ghaneimeh said it is going to be difficult for women, especially in the tribal regions, "because many clans have already announced their support for a certain male candidate."

"Many candidates have already announced their withdrawal from the elections in certain areas in favour of other family members, which means that the votes are destined to go to a certain individual," Mr. Abu Ghaneimeh explained.

Eight women are running in Amman's five districts. They are Aysa Razem-Khawaja (1st, Muslim seat), Toujan Faisal (3rd, Circassian), Emily Naffa' and Norma Nassar (3rd, Christian), Fatme Hassounah (4th, Muslim), Laila Faisal and Hiam Kalimat (5th, Circassian), and Fardos Masri (5th, Muslim).

The remaining nine are Fatme Obaidat and Samiha Tel (Irbid's 8 Muslim seats), Wissaf Ka'abneh (Central Bedouins' 2 Muslim seats), Sabah Anati (Zarqa's 4 Muslim seats), Ajayeb Hdayes (Balqa's 6 Muslim seats), Da'ad Sultan Tamimi (Aqaba's 2 Muslim seats), Siham Bayaidah and Hafetha Ma'ayah (Karak's 7 Muslim seats), and Nawal Momani (Ajloun's 2 Muslim seats).

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

* "Los Gozos y Las Sombras" (pts. 5, 6, and 7) at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

* "Empire of the Sun" at the American Centre, Abdoun, Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

* Art film: "Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec" (in French — with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Mazen Asfour) at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL

* Greek film "Me Mia Craviyi" and Spanish film "Tengo una Casa," at the Royal Cultural Centre, Thursday at 4:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., respectively.

* Spanish film "Tengo una Casa" and French film "Grosse Fatigue" at the Royal Cultural Centre, Friday at 4:30 and 8:00 p.m., respectively.

PLAY

* Children's play "Shahrour and Traffic Rules" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 10:00 a.m. (daily until Oct. 16).

MOTOR SHOW

* "Motor Show 98" at the Amman Inter-

national Motor Show (Tel. 714211), until Oct. 20.

EXHIBITIONS

* "New Generations" (students' drawings, water colours, and oil paintings) at the Orthodox Club, Abdoun, until Oct. 17.

* Paintings by Abdul Qader Bakheet at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Oct. 30.

* Works by Iraqi artist Ali Abadi at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Oct. 23 (Tel. 55375980).

* "The Project of the Essence, Aspects of the Italian Paintings in the 90s" at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Yarmouk University, until Oct. 22.

* Exhibition of paintings and weaving entitled "Murmurs of Our Land" by Riham Ghassib and Bani Hamida at Bani Hamida House (Tel. 6588967), until Oct. 30.

* Exhibition of Catalan masters of the 20th century entitled "Aura Mediterrània" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, until Oct. 28 (except Tuesdays).

* Quilt exhibition "Piecing It Together" by Ms. Virginia Harris at the American Centre, Abdoun, until Oct. 20.

CONDOLENCE

The International Staff of UNRWA Jordan mourn the passing of

MR. DENNIS L. BROWN

former Director of UNRWA Affairs, Jordan and Coordinator of Headquarters, Amman, on Oct. 8, 1997.

Letter of Condolence

Bassira - Insight, the American Women of Amman and the board of the Al-Hussein Society wish to convey their sympathy to

Paula Williams-Brown

on the death of her husband Dennis, whose kindness, caring and generosity of spirit has made him a truly memorable man. Letters of condolence can be sent to:

Paula Brown c/o Rusty Jay
562 - A
Avenue J. East
Grand Prairie, Texas 75050

Nobel work on supercold gases could improve space navigation

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Three research scientists were jointly awarded the Nobel Physics Prize Wednesday for developing techniques to superfreeze gases and slow down their molecules so they can be studied in detail.

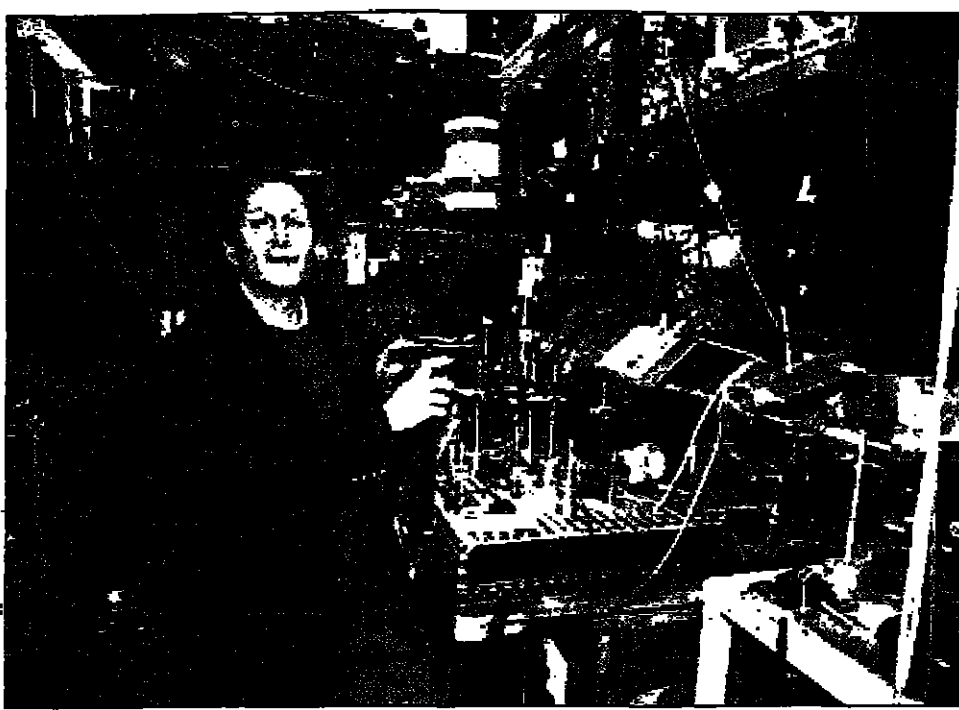
Announcing that two Americans and a Frenchman would share the honour, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said the practical implications of their work included designing atomic clocks 100 times more accurate than at present for use in space navigation.

The prize was jointly awarded to Steven Chu of Stanford University, William Phillips of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Claude Cohen-Tannoudji, a member of the French Academy of Sciences.

The three will share the prize and a cheque for 7.5 million kronor (\$1 million) at a ceremony in Stockholm on Dec. 10, the 101st anniversary of the death of the Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel.

Cohen-Tannoudji's colleagues said the announcement was "fantastic" but not unexpected. They said his work had "allowed us to reach an extreme degree of sophistication in manipulating atoms, inconceivable a few years ago."

In its citation, the Nobel Swedish Academy explained that it is hard to study atoms and molecules in gases because at room



Frenchman Claude Cohen-Tannoudji, winner of the 1997 Nobel Physics Prize, seen in his laboratory at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (Reuter photo)

temperatures they move in different directions at a speed of about 4,000 kilometres an hour.

Cooling does not solve the problem, because gases condense into liquids and then freeze before the atoms have slowed down enough to be studied.

"Even a temperature as low as minus 270 degrees Celsius involves speeds of about 400 kilometres an hour," the jury said. "Only as one approaches absolute zero (minus 273 degrees C) does the speed fall greatly."

"The three have developed methods of using

laser light to cool gases to the microkelvin temperature range and keeping the chilled atoms floating or captured in different kinds of 'atom traps'."

Microkelvin is one-millionth of a degree above absolute zero.

The laser light functions as a thick liquid, dubbed optical molasses, in which the atoms are slowed down from their normal room temperature speed to temperatures of less than one kilometre per hour without the gas becoming solid.

"The new methods have contributed greatly to increasing our knowledge

of the interplay between radiation and matter," it went on.

"In particular, they have opened the way to a deeper understanding of the quantum-physical behaviour of gases at low temperatures."

But the prize-winners' research had practical implications too.

"The methods may lead to the design of more precise atomic clocks for use in, for example, space navigation and accurate determination of position," the citation said.

In 1985, Steven Chu developed a powerful method for cooling atoms

with laser light, called Doppler cooling. Meanwhile, Phillips had developed a Zeeman slower, a coil with a varying magnetic field, along the axis of which atoms could be retarded by an opposed laser beam.

Chu had also "constructed an atomic fountain in which laser-cooled atoms are sprayed up from a trap like jets of water," the citation said.

"With this technique it is believed that it will be possible to build atomic clocks with a hundred-fold greater precision than at present."

Phillips found in 1988 that a temperature as low as 40 microkelvins could be attained, six times lower than the theoretically calculated Doppler limit.

"We are very happy but not really surprised because it was predictable," said Serge Haroche, head of the Physics Department at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, where Cohen-Tannoudji has spent most of his career.

Cohen-Tannoudji was "the leader of a French school of atomic physics and optics which has allowed us to reach an extreme degree of sophistication in manipulating atoms, inconceivable a few years ago," said Haroche.

He added that the two Americans were well known by their French colleagues. "This award is amply merited by the three laureates," he said.

Three share Nobel Chemistry Prize for work on energy transfer in cells

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Three researchers, an American, a Briton and a Dane, were Wednesday jointly awarded the Nobel Chemistry Prize for helping to unlock the mystery of how energy is transferred between living cells.

"The three laureates have performed pioneering work on enzymes that participate in the conversion of the 'high energy' compound ATP," the Swedish Academy of Sciences said.

ATP stands for adenosine triphosphate, the universal energy carrier in living cells. Enzymes are complex molecules which accelerate biochemical reactions such as fermentation in yeast.

Paul Boyer of the United States and John Walker of Britain share one half of the prize for showing how an enzyme known as ATP synthase helps in the formation of ATP.

Jens Skou of Denmark receives the other half for the discovery of the enzyme sodium, potassium-stimulated adenosine triphosphatase.

That enzyme "maintains the balance of sodium and potassium ions in the living cell," the jury said.

The three researchers will be presented with the Nobel Prize, and a shared cheque for 7.5 million kronor (\$1 million), at a ceremony in Stockholm on Dec. 10, the anniversary of the death of the Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel.

ATP, which was discovered in 1929, is the universal carrier of chemical energy in all living organisms, from bacteria and

fungi to plants and animals, including humans.

It captures the energy released by the combustion of nutrients and transfers it to reactions that require energy, for example the building of cell components, muscle contraction, transmission of nerve messages and many other functions.

ATP has been called "the cell's energy currency." Several previous Nobel prize-winners were honoured for work on ATP, including the British chemist Alexander Todd who first chemically synthesised ATP in 1948 and won the prize in 1957.

Boyer, the 44th American to win the chemistry prize, was born in Provo, Utah, in 1918. He has been professor emeritus in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of California in Los Angeles since 1990.

He began his studies of ATP formation in the early 1950s. His chief interest has been to find out by isotope techniques how ATP synthase functions and, particularly, how it uses energy to create new ATP.

"Boyer and his co-workers have proposed, on the basis of biochemical data, a mechanism for how ATP is formed from adenosine diphosphate (ADP) and inorganic phosphate," the citation said.

During the 1990s, Boyer collaborated with crystallographers to clarify the three-dimensional structure of ATP synthase.

"Walker's work complements Boyer's in a remarkable manner and further

studies based on this structure demonstrate the correctness of the mechanism proposed by Boyer," the jury said.

Walker, senior scientist at the Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology at Cambridge, England, is the 24th Briton to win the prize. Born in Halifax in 1941, he was elected to the Royal Society two years ago. "Walker and his co-workers have established the structure of the enzyme and verified the mechanism proposed by Boyer," the Nobel jury said.

Skou, the first Dane to be honoured by the Nobel committee for chemistry, was born in 1918. He received his doctorate at Aarhus University in 1954, became professor of physiology at the same university in 1963 and professor of biophysics in 1977.

Using finely ground crab nerve membranes, Skou searched for an ATP-degrading enzyme in the nerve membrane that could be associated with ion transport.

In 1957, he published the first article on ATPase, which was activated by sodium and potassium ions. He was the first to describe an enzyme that can promote directed transport of substances through a cell membrane, a fundamental property of all living cells.

Numerous enzymes have since been demonstrated to have essentially similar functions.

The announcement of the chemistry prize concludes the 1997 Nobel season.

Debut Indian novelist wins top British literature prize

LONDON (AFP) — A debut Indian novelist described as a literary phenomenon Tuesday won the prestigious Booker Prize with her debut novel, "The God of Small Things." Arundhati Roy had been favourite to win the 20,000-pound (\$32,000) award with her controversial novel, which features love-making scenes between a Christian businessman and a low-caste Hindu man and caused outrage in India for its alleged moral contraventions.

Ms. Roy said earlier Tuesday she had no plans to write a second novel despite the huge excitement caused by her debut work, which is set in a pickle factory in southern India and centres on twins struggling to enjoy a childhood within their bizarre family.

"I'll only write another book when I have a book to

write," said Ms. Roy, 37, who is a part-time screenwriter and aerobics teacher and lives with her filmmaker husband in Delhi. "I've never believed in professions: I believe in professionalism. I don't believe in writing a book just because I am a writer," she added.

Her novel, which has been described by many critics as a lyrical masterpiece, started a bidding war among publishers before being snapped up for a reported one million pounds (\$1.6 million).

The other contenders for the prize were Belfast-born Bernard MacLaverty with "Grace Notes," Australian Madeleine St. John with "The Essence of the Thing," Briton Jim Crace with "Quarantine," Mick Jackson with "The Underground Man," and Tim Parks with "Europa."

Booker Prize chairwoman, Professor Gillian Beer, said after the prize was announced in a central London ceremony late Tuesday: "With extraordinary linguistic inventiveness Ms. Roy funnels the history of South India through the eyes of seven-year-old twins."

"The story is fundamental as well as local: it is about love and death yet tells its tale quite clearly. We were all engrossed by this novel."

The author spent four years working on the 350-page book, which has been published in 19 countries, sometimes writing as little as seven lines a day.

Ms. Roy, who says she writes to "make sense of the world," is the latest in a long line of writers to triumph with an Indian-related book.

1/2 of world vasectomies performed in China

BEIJING (AFP) — About half of the world's vasectomies are performed in China, a researcher with the state Family Planning Commission told Wednesday the International Population Conference being held here.

"Although the country's rate of vasectomies is about 10 per cent, because the population is so large, China is still in the lead in the world in using this male sterilisation method," said Liu Yunrong, a professor with the commission's Science and Technology Institute.

Some 22 million Chinese men had vasectomies in 1995, or half the world's total for the year, he said, as quoted by the official Xinhua news agency.

According to U.N. statistics, about five per cent of men across the world undergo vasectomies.

China's government promotes the operation as part of its strict one-child family planning policy, which is enforced most strictly in urban areas.

Couples having more than one child face economic penalties including fines, loss of promotion and, in the state sector, slashed housing benefits. As a result, some men take the precaution of undergoing the surgical procedure after a first child.

The report raised men for shouldering a larger role in family planning, quoting demographers as saying it will ultimately benefit women and children, protect women's rights, and "help avoid risks and health problems caused by induced abortions."

Foreign experts at the conference have criticised China's family planning authorities for coercing women into unwanted abortions. Beijing insists that forced abortion is officially discouraged and blames overzealous local officials for occurrences for any abuses that occur.

Xinhua quoted experts as saying condom use is growing but should be further promoted. The number of vasectomies performed annually is expected to remain steady, they predicted. China produces one billion condoms annually, it said.

Congo's ex-strongman claims seizure of oil capital

LIBREVILLE (AFP) — Forces backing Congo's former military strongman Denis Sassou Nguesso have seized control of the centre of the main oil town and port Pointe Noire, a spokesman for his party said Wednesday.

Mr. Sassou Nguesso's Democratic and Popular Forces (FDP) also took the city's airport, and resistance by loyalists of rival President Pascal Lissouba was expected to end towards midday, the spokesman said in the Gabonese capital Libreville.

The Angolan government Wednesday denied that Angolan soldiers had crossed into civil war-torn Congo in an attack on Pointe Noire, after unidentified troops were reported to have crossed the border from Angola's Cabinda enclave.

"Angola has sent no soldiers to Congo," a Defence Ministry spokesman said in Luanda.

However, the Belgian Foreign Ministry Wednesday charged that Pointe Noire, Congo's economic capital, was in the hands of Angolan troops.

"We have received confirmation" that the town has

been taken by Angolan soldiers, Foreign Ministry spokesman Andre Querton said in Brussels, adding that the city was reported quiet.

"The situation is calm," Mr. Querton said. "Since 9:30 a.m. (0830 GMT), there has been no more shooting."

He said that troops loyal to Mr. Lissouba had apparently "left the town."

"There have been no Belgian or other foreign victims to our knowledge," Mr. Querton added.

The French petroleum giant Elf-Aquitaine, with a major stake in Congo through its subsidiary Elf-Congo, issued a similar statement in Paris saying that the "situation was calm and returning to normal" in Pointe Noire.

Elf did not plan to pull out any expatriate workers. About 1,500 of some 2,000 foreign personnel in the town are reported to be French nationals.

Mr. Querton was unable to say whether the Angolan troops said to have invaded were regular soldiers. Luanda permanently stations large numbers of troops in the area where separatist wings of the Cabinda Enclave Liberation

Front (FLEC) are active.

The main armed independence factions are FLEC-Renewed and FLEC-FAC (Armed Forces of Cabinda), neither of which have ever seriously threatened the activities of oil companies working in the enclave.

The Luanda government has been accused by Mr. Lissouba supporters of sending troops to back General Sassou Nguesso in the civil war that broke out in June, but Angola countercharged that Cabinda had been attacked by Congolese soldiers and aircraft.

"We have never sent soldiers to Congo," the Defence Ministry spokesman said. "We have nothing to do with Congo," he added, though he repeated the Luandan government claim Sunday that forces had attacked from that country and that Angola would take "appropriate measures."

Cabinda, which lies to the north of the rest of Angola between a strip of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) territory and the enclaved Republic of Congo, is Luanda's main source of oil income.

'Kevorkian is bad for business'

DETROIT, Michigan (AFP) — Detroit-area hotel operators met here Tuesday to discuss steps to prevent the use of their facilities by clients of assisted-suicide advocate Jack Kevorkian.

"Shame on Kevorkian for putting innocent people through this kind of trauma," said Michael O'Callaghan, president of the Hotel Association of Greater Detroit. "If he wants to do that kind of stuff, he should be doing it in his van or in his garage."

At least 16 people have been found dead in hotel rooms in Detroit suburbs this year following assisted suicide efforts, with Mr. Kevorkian apparently involved in each case.

The bodies are always found alone, usually by a maid or motel worker, with a note referring inquiries to Mr. Kevorkian's attorneys.

Mr. Kevorkian has been linked to more than 60 deaths since he launched his assisted-suicide crusade in June 1990. But his attorney has said the former pathologist has helped in nearly 100 deaths.

Six of the eight deaths linked to Mr. Kevorkian since July 1 have involved people with multiple sclerosis, a non-fatal, progressive disease of the nervous system.

Mr. Kevorkian recently initiated a meeting with Macomb County prosecutor Carl Malinga to see if family members of his clients could transport the bodies to the county medical examiner's office without fear of prosecution.

Mr. Malinga said he was reserving all options to prosecute Mr. Kevorkian, but would research the law to see if he could comply with Mr. Kevorkian's request.

Mr. Kevorkian has been looking for a suitable place for his work since he began his crusade seven years ago. Deaths of Michigan residents have usually taken place in their homes, but clients who come from other states have died in a variety of locations.

Mr. Kevorkian's attorney Geoffrey Fieger said his client hopes soon to make a new effort to open a suicide clinic. One person died in a clinic he had opened in 1995 before authorities closed it down.

Assisted suicide is illegal in Michigan, but Mr. Kevorkian has been acquitted three times.

AIDS may spread faster in Asia than in Africa — U.N.

BEIJING (R) — AIDS may spread faster in Southeast Asia than in Africa because of widespread drug use in the region, a U.N. official said Wednesday.

"There are many injecting drug-users in Asia who may spread the disease to the general public," said Michel Carael, senior social scientist at the joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

"You don't have that in Africa where the epidemic is mainly spread by heterosexuals," Mr. Carael said in an interview at an international population conference in Beijing.

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which can lead to AIDS, is most commonly spread through sexual intercourse and the sharing of hypodermic needles.

A high proportion of intravenous drug users in Southeast Asia meant the disease could spread to the general public easily, Mr. Carael said.

"We think in some countries of the region there will be huge epidemics," he said.

In Thailand, which has a flourishing sex and drugs trade, the infection rate among the adult population was approaching three per cent, compared with 0.6 per cent for Southeast Asia and India combined, U.N. figures showed.

In urban areas of eastern and southern Africa, almost three in every 10 people were infected.

"In south and east Africa, the epidemic is still rising at an incredibly high level," Mr. Carael said.

"The future is very gloomy in Africa. Experts from more than 80 countries were

attending the 23rd general population conference in China, where rapid economic liberalisation has been mirrored by a swing in sexual attitudes, especially in the developed coastal cities.

John Anarfi, a demographer at the University of Ghana, lamented the fact that none of the studies presented at the conference on AIDS and demographics came from Asia.

"What was most unfortunate is the complete absence of papers from Asia, which is now regarded as the hottest bed of HIV in the world," he said.

Mr. Carael said much of Asia's future depended on how seriously its governments confronted the disease.

"Southeast Asia may escape a major epidemic if action is taken early," he said.

Thailand was a good example of how the epidemic could be contained by widespread use of condoms, education and health services, Mr. Carael said.

AIDS began to spread in Africa some 20 years ago, but only hit Asia in the late 80s, Mr. Carael said.

"There is this hope that in countries where the epidemic is just starting, such as China, that with a new drug or a new strategy you can catch the epidemic," he said.

There were only 5,990 reported HIV carriers in China, a nation of 1.2 billion people, a U.N. official said, quoting state statistics released at the end of 1996.

"If their problem is not tackled seriously with a huge prevention programme, there might be a catastrophe," he said.

Rwandan officials fear high death toll in massacre

KIGALI (AFP) — Hutu Interahamwe militia-men are likely to have massacred far more than 37 people in a raid on a camp for repatriated Rwandans, local officials said Wednesday, fearing many had burned to death.

Late Tuesday, authorities said at least 37 people died in the attack on the camp at Mutura in the northwest of the central African nation, but a top official said Wednesday that fire also swept through the camp.

"Roofs fell in and many tents were razed to the ground. We don't know how many people were trapped by the flames," Gisenyi district administrator Epimache Ndayigimana told AFP.

"This morning, we're going there to try to establish a definitive casualty toll," he added.

The prefect of the troubled province on the border with the former Zaire said the militia attacked early Tuesday morning with guns, machetes and clubs.

They set fire to the camp before security forces could intervene and then fled into the Gishwati forest, a few kilometres to the south, where the militia frequently fall back after raids.

The repatriates, many of whom had lived for decades in exile from Rwanda when it was dominated by the majority Hutus, had been scheduled to move into villages where "building was well under way", Mr. Ndayigimana said.

None of the assailants was caught, but survivors said they had recognised some inhabitants of the region, where an investigation was under way, he added.

Since August, Gisenyi has been wracked by conflict between the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) and Hutu militiamen and soldiers of the former army who fled, many of them to eastern Zaire, after they were routed by the RPF.

Armed Hutu extremists — many of whom remained over the border with refugees until Laurent Kabila in October last year launched a successful rebellion to oust dictator Mobutu Sese Seko and establish the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) — have been accused of the genocide of up to 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates between April and June 1994.

Civilians have often been the target of recent attacks, including ethnic Tutsis long resident in the former Zaire who had fled to Rwanda and were massacred on Aug. 21, when 131 refugees and 17 other people were killed.

studies based on this structure demonstrate the correctness of the mechanism proposed by Bogen, the jury said.

Walker, senior scientist at the Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology at Cambridge, England, was the 24th Briton to win the prize. Born in Britain in 1941, he was awarded the Royal Society's annual "Walker" prize in 1995. Walker and his colleagues have established the structure of the enzyme, which is involved in the metabolism of the Nobel prize.

Skou, the first Dane to be honoured by the Nobel committee, was born in 1902. He received his doctorate from Aarhus University in 1928. He was a professor of physiology at the University of Copenhagen from 1945 to 1960. He was a member of the Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters.

Using X-ray crystallography, Skou and his colleagues searched for the structure of the enzyme, which is involved in the metabolism of the Nobel prize. The structure of the enzyme was determined by Skou and his colleagues in 1960. The structure of the enzyme was determined by Skou and his colleagues in 1960.

'Kevorkian is bad for business'

DETROIT (AP) — Dr. Jack Kevorkian, the physician who has become a national figure for his role in helping terminally ill patients die, is being accused of being a bad influence on the medical profession.

The American Medical Association (AMA) has issued a statement saying that Kevorkian's actions are "incompatible with the ethical standards of the medical profession." The AMA is calling for a boycott of Kevorkian's services.

Kevorkian, 68, is a physician in Detroit who has helped more than 100 patients die. He has been charged with second-degree murder in the death of a patient.

The AMA is not alone in criticizing Kevorkian. The American Society of Human Rights (ASHR) has also issued a statement saying that Kevorkian's actions are "incompatible with the ethical standards of the medical profession." The ASHR is calling for a boycott of Kevorkian's services.

Kevorkian has responded to the criticism by saying that he is a physician who is helping his patients die. He has said that he is not a murderer and that he is not a doctor who is helping his patients die.

Kevorkian has also said that he is a physician who is helping his patients die. He has said that he is not a murderer and that he is not a doctor who is helping his patients die.

World News

Queen Elizabeth's Indian speech blocked

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A speech due to be given by Queen Elizabeth during her state visit to India has been cancelled at the last minute by the Indian government, British officials said here Wednesday.

They said the speech had been due to be made at a banquet in Madras Thursday.

British officials said that, according to Indian protocol, speeches by visiting dignitaries should be made in the capital.

They conceded the cancellation had come "a bit late" but said they accepted the decision.

The speech, which was "not controversial", was due to stress the warm ties between India and Britain.

British teacher apologises for 1919 massacre in India

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A British schoolteacher has apologised on behalf of his countrymen for a 1919 colonial massacre in India in which 379 civilians were killed during a peaceful meeting, the Hindustan Times said Wednesday.

Christopher Balchin, a high school teacher in New York, said in a letter he "wanted to apologise, as a representative Englishman, to the people of Amritsar for what my country did to them. I think it was barbaric," he said.

The incident in the northern town of Amritsar, which also left around 1,200 wounded, was one of the greatest blots of British rule in India.

Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip visited the site Tuesday and laid a wreath at the memorial in what was seen as a gesture of reconciliation.

Mr. Balchin said he was ashamed that, as a student at Oxford, he "agreed with the accepted view" that the British empire had brought "needed civilisation to lesser peoples."

He said he now realised it was based on the "ugly, wrong and completely unscientific idea" that other peoples did not exist in their own right or have the "meaning, hopes and fears as real as any Englishman."

Mr. Balchin said they were perceived as "inferior beings who existed to be used for Britain's own power, glory and wealth."

Commonwealth bad boys still causing headaches

LONDON (AFP) — Efforts to whip Nigeria and other Commonwealth bad boys into line have met with only qualified success, Secretary-General Emeaka Anyaoku admitted Wednesday in his annual report on the activities of the 54-nation organisation.

Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Gambia, which have all fallen by the democratic wayside, have been targeted to carry out democratic reforms by the Commonwealth's troubleshooting eight-nation Ministerial Action Group.

The group was set up in New Zealand two years ago to deal with persistent violators of the organisation's agreed principles of democracy, human rights, rule of law and just and honest government.

Nigeria, which falls short on all counts, and Sierra Leone have been suspended from the Commonwealth.

Asked on BBC Radio why Nigeria had not been expelled altogether, Mr. Anyaoku said the Commonwealth was the only international organisation which had suspended Nigeria from membership.

"The Commonwealth is determined that Nigeria should be returned to democratically elected government... and keep to the programme it is committed to," he said.

Mr. Anyaoku noted in his report that although Lagos maintains it is on course for a transition to a democratically elected government by October 1998, "concerns persist regarding its human rights record."

Sierra Leone, which had successfully completed its transition to democracy from military rule, was "tragically plunged back into another military takeover on May 25, 1997," he said.

Only Gambia, which held parliamentary elections in January 1997, was on the right path for a transition to democracy but it was "still giving cause for some concern," said Mr. Anyaoku.

The ministerial action group — comprising Britain, Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa and Zimbabwe — will report its findings at Edinburgh when Commonwealth heads of government meet for their biennial summit Oct. 24-27.

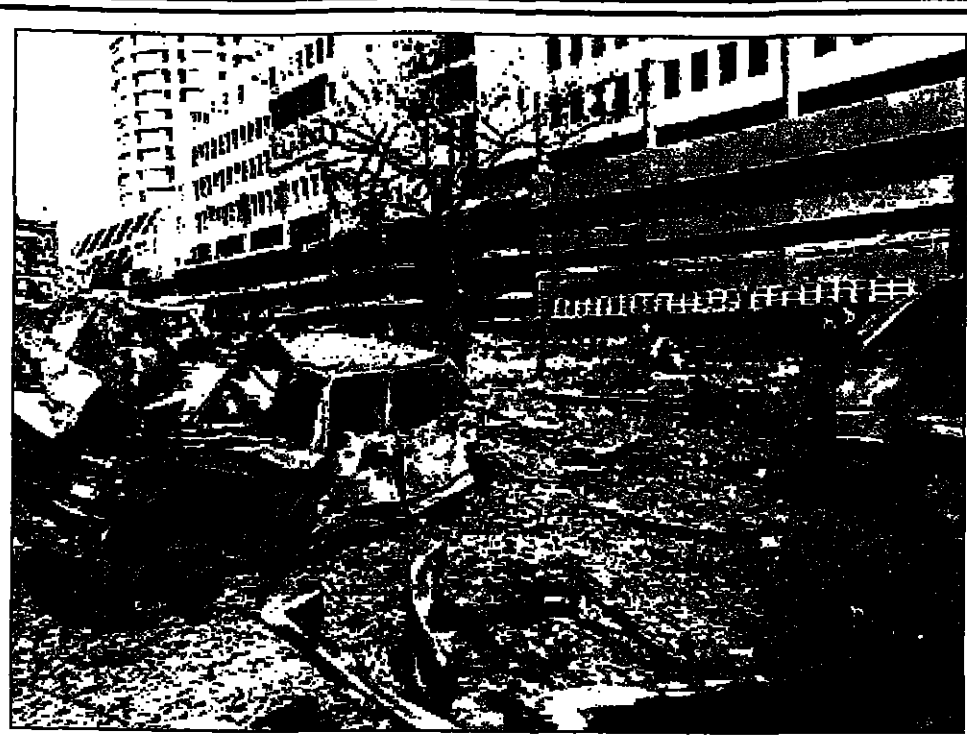
Britain is expected to push hard for tougher action against Nigeria in line with the Labour government's pledge to inject human rights criteria into foreign policy.

Mr. Anyaoku said there had been a resurgence of interest in the Commonwealth which groups mainly independent states of the former British empire and encompasses 1.7 billion people.

It formally readmitted South Africa at its last summit in New Zealand two years ago, along with the former Portuguese colony of Mozambique in east Africa and the Central African republic of Cameroon.

Fiji was readmitted on Oct. 1 after being ousted in 1987 for adopting a racist constitution which has since been repealed. More countries are knocking at the door, including Yemen and Rwanda. Yasser Arafat has expressed interest in membership for his new Palestinian National Authority.

The benefits that come with membership are mostly achieved through cooperation in the scientific, technical, educational and cultural fields.



The scene at the car park outside the Galadari Hotel after a bombing in the main business district of Colombo (AFP photo)

Blast devastates Sri Lanka business centre, 20 dead

COLOMBO (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas exploded a huge truck bomb in Sri Lanka's main business district Wednesday and fought a gunbattle with security forces, leaving at least 20 people dead and more than 100 injured, officials said.

Gunmen from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) drove the truck into the car park of the Galadari Hotel which adjoins the 39-storey World Trade Centre (WTC), the country's tallest building, then detonated it, a military official said.

The guerrilla movement, which was included in the U.S. State Department's list of foreign terrorist groups last week, denied the attack and blamed it on security forces trying to discredit them.

More than 30 foreign tourists were wounded by flying glass and taken blood-spattered to hospital, but were not in serious condition.

Army Deputy Chief of Staff Lal Weerasooriya told AFP that the guerrillas fought their way into the hotel car park to get near the trade centre, which houses the Central Bank.

"They first killed four guards at the car park and then several gunmen fanned out firing at several buildings in the area while the truck was taken right up to the WTC" and exploded, he said.

The bombing came as the Sri Lankan government unveiled a radical power-sharing plan aimed at ending the Tigers' separatist war in the north and east of the country which has claimed more than 50,000 lives since 1972.

State radio said 12 Tigers were killed in street battles after the huge early morning explosion that shattered windows in almost every building in the city centre and was heard 10 kilometres away.

It caused severe damage to the trade centre, which was ceremonially opened by President Chandrika Kumaratunga Sunday.

The Galadari and Hilton hotels, and the high-rise Bank of Ceylon also took the brunt of the blast while the nearby Defence Ministry, the presidential office and military headquarters were badly hit.

The General Hospital said eight people were killed in the blast, a figure which included the car park guards, and other 105 admitted for treatment. Hospital Director Terrance de Silva said 33 foreigners were among those wounded.

There were five each from Japan, Britain and France, four Singaporeans, two each from Jordan and Australia and one each from Cuba, Lebanon, Egypt, Malaysia, Pakistan, India, America, Sweden and Holland.

Mr. de Silva said no foreigners were killed. Witnesses said gunmen fired from buildings in the area and the military poured hundreds of additional troops, including the elite rapid deployment force, into the bomb site.

The army cordoned off the entire area while helicopters were used to coordinate security operations. One ambulance and a fire engine also came under rebel fire, witnesses said.

One Tamil Tiger guerrilla shot dead a Buddhist monk, Vitharandeniya Chandrajoti, as he gave a sermon in a temple opposite the Hilton, police said. However, the rebel was promptly shot dead by troops, officials said.

Police said the casualties were low compared to similar past bomb attacks because Wednesday is a Buddhist holiday and offices and shops were closed.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Ravinath Ariyaratne said: "The fact that the LTTE acted with impunity to carry out such an attack on a holiday knowing fully well that a large number of foreign nationals would be affected indicates that they no longer care at all for what the world thinks about them."

The guerrillas staged a similar devastating bomb attack against the Central Bank building on Jan. 31, 1996, that killed 91 people and wounded 1,400.

The London-based LTTE spokesman Anton Rajah telephoned the AFP Colombo bureau to "categorically deny" they were involved.

He said it was the work of sections of the Sri Lankan security forces to "tarnish the image of the LTTE."

Ironically, the Central Bank had moved to the World Trade Centre after that attack and employees lost a court battle recently seeking to stay away from the WTC arguing that it was a potential Tiger target.

The government has already indicted LTTE leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, for the bank attack.

The huge attack came exactly a week after Washington included the LTTE in a list of 30 foreign terrorist organisations, effectively blocking American funding for the rebels and preventing them from entering that country.

U.S. embassy here had said that the U.S. action to ban the LTTE was taken because they were considered a threat to American interests.

Russian deputies postpone no-confidence vote

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian deputies Wednesday postponed for a week a vote of no-confidence in the government of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Earlier, Boris Yeltsin implicitly threatened the Russian parliament with dissolution, urging deputies to avoid early elections by throwing out a no-confidence vote in his government.

In a message to the state Duma read out by speaker Gennady Seleznev during the no-confidence debate, Mr. Yeltsin urged the Communist-dominated legislature to drop the vote.

"I call on deputies not to hold the vote of no-confidence today. I do not want confrontation, I do not want new early elections," his message read.

"Don't put me in a complicated situation," he added.

The Russian leader told the 450-member Duma he was ready to work with a quadripartite commission in the search for a compromise between parliament and the government, which is seeking to push through a tough budget for 1998, a new tax code and land reform.

"In the name of calm in Russia, I ask each of the 145 deputies who launched the no-confidence motion to remove the issue from today's debate. I guarantee the government will learn lessons from the criticism it has heard about itself," he added.

Following the intervention, deputies called a 30-minute break in the debate, during which the Communists and their allies from the Agrarian Party and Popular Power met for last-minute discussions.

As a result, Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov called on parliament to postpone a vote of no-confidence in the government of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin until Monday.

Mr. Yeltsin can dissolve parliament only if it votes no-confidence in his government twice in three months, although Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin vowed earlier to quit if Wednesday's vote went against him.

Saturn probes set off on seven-year voyage

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AFP) — The Cassini and Huygens space probes blasted off Wednesday to begin an ambitious seven-year voyage to Saturn and its biggest moon Titan.

The launch, postponed Monday due to technical problems and high winds at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, took place on schedule at 4:43 a.m. (0843 GMT), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) said.

Two minutes after lift-off, the probes' Titan-IVB solid-rocket boosters separated in the night sky and fell back towards Earth.

An upper-stage Centaur rocket then lifted Cassini-Huygens into a brief orbit before igniting one last time to catapult it on its long voyage.

The probes will later draw power from the gravitational pull of various other planets on their 3.5 billion kilometre journey to Saturn.

They will slingshot around Venus in 1998 and 1999, then around the Earth in 1999 and finally Jupiter in 2000 before reaching Saturn's orbit by July 2004.

The probes should reach Saturn in July 2004, almost 20 years after the first flights over the "ringed planet" by the Pioneer II (1979) and Voyager 1 and 2 (1980 and 1981) probes.

Five months later, the U.S. probe Cassini will release the European Huygens probe, which will then land on Titan.

During the following four years, Cassini will orbit Saturn some 70 times to study the formation of its rings and the composition of its atmosphere.

The planet, which lacks a solid surface, has a magnetic field and is surrounded by a thick atmosphere of mainly hydrogen and helium. The rings, whose formation is still a mystery, are made up of particles of rock and ice. Studying them may help scientists understand the origin of the solar system.

The probe will also photograph the planet and several of its moons, including Titan, the largest of Saturn's some 20 satellites.

Huygens will gather data on Titan's atmosphere during its descent towards Titan, including the microscopic drops suspended in the atmosphere.

Once it lands, the probe will transmit to Cassini its observations.

The Huygens probe is taking messages from Earth, written and recorded on a CD-ROM disk, to Titan.

But the launch has sparked protests by environmental groups concerned about the 30 kilograms of radioactive plutonium-238 on board Cassini.

There were no protest groups present near the launch site Wednesday, since over the weekend they gave up trying to get NASA to abort the space mission.

NASA has repeatedly said that in the case of an accident during launch, there would be practically no risk of dangerous radioactive debris falling to Earth.



A Titan 4B rocket lifts off from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station en route to the planet Saturn (Reuters)

S. Korea ruling party acts against opposition leader

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea's ruling New Korea Party (NKP) Wednesday said it would file an action against opposition presidential candidate Kim Dae-Jung to push the prosecution into starting a corruption investigation.

"The complaints will be filed by Thursday," said NKP spokesman Lee Sa-Chul, adding that party legal experts were drawing up required documents to submit to the prosecution.

In a fit-for-fact, Kim Dae-Jung's National Congress for New Politics (NCNP) decided to report NKP presidential candidate Lee Hoi-Chang and five others to the parliamentary ethics committee for disciplinary measures.

The NCNP charged that Mr. Lee and the five NKP leaders had violated human rights and privacy by spreading groundless allegations of corruption against the opposition leader and his relatives.

The ruling party has alleged that Mr. Kim stashed away millions in slush money he had milked from business firms.

But so far the leading opposition figure's presidential chances seem undented, leaving the ruling NKP facing unfavourable opinion about its "expose" tactics.

During a regular parliamentary inspection of the prosecutor general's office that lasted into early Wednesday, NKP lawmakers strongly urged the prosecution to investigate the "corruption" case.

But Prosecutor General Kim Tase-Jung said only that the prosecution would study the case if a complaint was filed. He added that there is little evidence yet to back charges that Mr. Kim received slush money as bribes.

An NKP legislator, Chung Hyung-Keun, said during the session that Kim Dae-Jung had accepted \$22 million in 1989 from then president Roh Tae-Woo in return for a political ceasefire.

The NCNP has denied the charge, the latest in a spate of corruption charges heaped by the ruling party on the veteran politician.

Kim Dae-Jung has admitted accepting funds from supporters and businessmen but said that no strings were attached. He brushed aside graft charges as "nonsensical" and repeated his call for talks with President Kim Young-Sam.

Polls have given Kim Dae-Jung a solid lead over rivals for the Dec. 18 presidential election.

Mr. Kim polled no less than 31 per cent, trailed by his closest rival Rhee In-Je, former Kyonggi governor and ruling party breakaway, by more than five percentage points.

Mr. Lee of the ruling NKP took a distant third with less than 20 per cent. Commentators said the election picture could change drastically in coming weeks as a result of the wrangles and political alliances.

The Christian-run Kookmin daily said that the people were "fed up with" what it called "mud-slinging."

"The longer the revelations and exchanges of accusations continue, the deeper the hatred of politics by the people will become. The case must be left in the hands of the prosecution and (the parties) should get back to arguing over visions and platforms," the paper said.

HIV, TB spreading among Russian convicts

MOSCOW (AFP) — The number of HIV-infected prison inmates in Russia this year has reached 1,179 people, almost four times 1996's level, ITAR-TASS news agency said citing a government official.

However, according to Major-General Vyacheslav Ovchinnikov, head of the Russian Interior Ministry's Prisons Department, the most serious problem threatening the health of convicts is the spread of tuberculosis.

So far this year, prison medical personnel have reported 74,000 cases of tuberculosis and other 10,000 cases have been reported among persons who have been arrested by police but not yet tried.

Gen. Ovchinnikov said that both diseases are spreading as the result of overcrowding in prison cells and insufficient sanitary measures in detention and medical treatment centres.

Earthquake kills seven in Chile

SANTIAGO (AFP) — A powerful earthquake rattled northern and central Chile late Tuesday killing at least seven people, Interior Minister Carlos Figueroa said.

The quake, measuring 6.2 degrees on the Richter scale, struck at 22:05 p.m. (0105 GMT, Wednesday) and lasted around two minutes.

Four of the victims belonged to the same family who were crushed when their house caved in at Pueblo Nuevo, some 350 kilometres north of here, Mr. Figueroa said.

A 10-year-old boy died in Ovalle, 330 kilometres north of here, and a 22-year-old youth in the port city of Coquimbo, 70 kilometres further north.

The quake was felt here and other central cities such as Valparaiso and Vina del Mar. Panic-stricken residents rushed out of their homes to the streets.

Quoting a statement from the National Emergency Office, Mr. Figueroa said the earthquake hit the Coquimbo area the hardest.

In the towns of Vicuna and Illapel, east of Coquimbo, the quake levelled several adobe homes, left cracks in larger buildings and caused rockslides to block several roads.

The temblor's epicentre was located in the Andean Mountains near the Argentine border, officials said.

It was the strongest earthquake felt here since a temblor in June 1995 at Antofagasta, some 1,200 kilometres north of here, killed three people and caused widespread damage.

In Peru, a 4.3-degree earthquake was felt in the northern part of the country late Tuesday. There were no reports of injuries or damage. Peruvian experts said the Peruvian and Chilean quakes were unrelated.

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Secret weapon
of modernity

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan seized the occasion of the International Day of Teachers on Tuesday to reiterate his call for a complete and comprehensive revamping of the educational system in the country. What better way to pay tribute to teachers and their pivotal role in shaping society than to reflect on ways and means to advance and enlighten the mission of teaching at all levels especially at the elementary and secondary levels. Prince Hassan's call for quality education as part of an integrated approach to sophisticated and enlightened teaching methods is therefore timely.

In order for schools to afford themselves of quality education, they must of course have access to qualified teachers and enjoy an appropriate educational infrastructure. Training teachers in quality and comprehensive education is no easy task and calls first of all for the political will to do and the necessary investment to help accomplish. There is, of course, no way for public education to receive the necessary funding unless expenditures are cut elsewhere. The government, therefore, must define its priorities and earmark large investments to education at the expense of other national expenditures. This is where the concept of soft security versus hard security finds its strongest expression. That is why investing in classroom computers is better than investing in tanks especially when considering that the cost of one piece of the latter is enough to buy a hundred pieces of the former.

Yet the financial dimension of the crusade to uplift education may be the easier part of the overall equation. Turning ordinary and traditional teachers into quality teachers is a process that not only costs money but takes time. There is no magic wand to creating a new culture for education in our midst. The process is obviously painstaking but a beginning must be made as soon as possible. Increasing awareness of the problem is clearly the start. This is in essence of what the Crown Prince said Tuesday when he sounded the alarm at the state of education in the country. Once there is a national recognition of the magnitude of the crisis, the next step is to start doing something about it. Investing more in schools and teachers is certainly in order in earnest. Above all, though, we need a board of educators to draw up short- and long-term plans to reform the educational system drawing on the experience of those people who are well-versed in modern educational systems. Prince Hassan has started the long process of correction. It is now up to the government to pick up the timely message and act on it as soon as possible.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallab blasted the government's plans to hike the price of water saying this was the least expected action to be taken especially in view of the peace treaty which was supposed to secure the Kingdom additional amounts of water from Lake Tiberias and the Yarmouk River. Qallab said the government already increased the price of bread, then most commodities and even electricity: the brunt being borne by limited income groups. A hike in water charges will certainly harm farmers, many small businesses will be adversely affected or forced to shut down, and desertification is likely to go unchecked if little water is allotted for trees and shrubs, the writer said. He added that by increasing the price of water the government will discourage many poor families from bathing their children, washing their clothes, and cleaning their homes. People will no longer grow parsley or mint in their small gardens, he said. Qallab urged the government to reconsider its decision and to restrict the increase in water charges to those who have swimming pools, as, he said, they are wealthy enough not to be affected by any kind of rates.

Al Ra'i's Munes Razzaz said the crisis in the Middle East is that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does not want peace and the Arabs do not want war. But, he added, Netanyahu is wrong to believe that just because they cannot beat Israel in conventional combat the Arabs cannot fight guerrilla warfare, as is Hizbollah at present. The writer said that Netanyahu who is unable or unwilling to make peace with the Arabs and continues to build settlements on their territory might sooner or later have to face guerrilla warfare not only in southern Lebanon but also in the other occupied regions of the Arab World. Hizbollah resistance groups are inflicting heavy losses on the Israelis through their continued fighting in a war of attrition that has been sapping the strength of the Israeli army, Razzaz said. According to Razzaz, this kind of war could be the choice of the Arab countries in the future in order to liberate their occupied territories. He said the U.S., which is helping Israel to perpetuate its hold over Arab lands, will eventually force the Arabs to wash their hands of the Oslo accords and seek other means to regain their rights.

View from Academia

Tennis, writing and students' performance

GENERALLY, OUR students, at the school as well as university levels, do not do well in writing; neither do they learn much, despite the efforts teachers exert and the many (excellent and not so excellent) textbooks we keep experimenting with. There are many causes for this unfortunate phenomenon.

For one thing, writing requires discipline, patience, precision, neatness, profound thinking, strict adherence to rules, etc. (in addition to creativity, of course). Our present-day culture, by contrast, teaches us — consciously or unconsciously — the exact opposite: haphazardness, impatience, imprecision, etc. What is taught in the classroom, in other words, runs counter (and sharply so) to what is practised daily at home, at school, in the community and in the culture at large. How can we teach students, for example, to observe the rules of writing, when we — as a society — do not observe traffic rules on the road?

For another, many students confuse writing skills with language skills. If you know English, Arabic, French, German, etc. well, and if you know vocabulary, grammar, and sentence patterns, then you know how to write. Such is a harmful false assumption, for writing skills go well beyond language skills. An excellent command of language is an important requirement for excellent writing, but it is one requirement among many others: development of ideas, organisation, documentation, etc. In the Arabic tradition, this particular problem may be inherited from the overemphasis on language correctness. The sole preoccupation of most teachers of Arabic is correction of

grammatical mistakes and acquisition of fancy vocabulary.

The third reason has to do with the negative influence of previous practices. Students come to the university with an experience in writing, one which (as has already been stated) is based on erroneous assumptions and practices of sorts — acquired mainly through the "composition" lessons, in which students (especially in Arabic lessons) primarily display their command of the language and their creative literary abilities.

Most students (from public as well as private schools) coming to university writing courses are much like those individuals who have played tennis for sometime on their own coming to their first serious tennis lesson to discover that everything they do is wrong: the way they hold the racket, the way they swing, the way they hit the ball, the way they move their body, the way they walk, the way they run, etc.

What should be done?

It is not easy to suggest a simple solution to a big problem. Writing is one of the most difficult courses to teach for instructors and one of the most painful for students. Many of our students (I would say the simple majority at least) take writing courses and do not benefit much, due to what has been just said and to the traditional method in which they are taught writing.

Several things need to be done to make the writing lessons more effective. Some take time. For instance, when our culture at large starts encouraging and training individuals to be careful, precise, rule-abiding, patient,

etc., writing will certainly improve. But obviously, we cannot sit hands-tied until society changes. We, teachers and educational institutions alike, need to act now.

Along these lines, it is important for teachers to pay equal attention to language and writing, and not emphasise language at the expense of writing skills. Another thing is for teachers in the earlier stages to take writing seriously and make sure that students do not, like bad tennis players, acquire bad writing habits.

One solution at the university level (and maybe even at the school level), since harm has been done, however, may come from tennis. Teachers, in other words, may learn a significant lesson from the tennis coach. When my tennis coach taught me a few years ago, the first thing he said was: forget everything you know, and let's start from scratch. This is how you should hold the racket (and not the way you do), this is how you should swing (and not the way you do), this is how you should hit the ball (and not the way you do), and so on.

This is crucial, for if students come to writing classes (and they most often do) with the assumption that they can write well when in fact they do not, there can be no effective learning and the previous errors will continue to exist. Like a good coach, a good teacher will have to wean students off previous habits, practices, methods, and ways.

In other words before we endow students with the desirable writing skills, we have to de-endow them of those which they have acquired in false, harmful ways.

Poison gas for an Israeli assassination:
What could they have been thinking?

By Jim Hoagland

WHY NOT a bullet? Or a knife? It is a terrible, horrifying question to ask about the botched assassination attempt by Israeli Mossad agents against a Hamas political leader in Amman. But it cries out to be asked: Why did the Israeli espionage service spray a lethal nerve toxin on an Arab adversary in a failed murder attempt, instead of relying on tried and true methods?

We are not likely ever to know for certain. It may involve tradecraft, such as increasing the agents' chances to get away undetected. Or maybe Mossad had constructed a cover story to deny there was any attack at all, hoping people would believe that Khaled Misha'al, the Hamas leader, died of some strange disease. But the image is so shocking — the political symbolism is so clear — that questions about this choice of weapon cannot be avoided: Israeli agents using a poison gas to eliminate a foe.

Is memory so transient? Did technology ride over a psychological threshold one would have thought made indelible by the Holocaust?

It is fair to raise questions against my questions, as many will. Does it really make a difference if Mr. Misha'al had been done in with a silencer-equipped pistol or an expertly thrown dagger? Does it matter more that the Mossad used a poison spray instead of the bombs Palestinian suicide artists have employed to tear Israeli bodies apart in the streets of Jerusalem? In one sense it surely makes a difference.

Mr. Misha'al would undoubtedly be dead today if the other methods had been used. He was saved when King Hussein of Jordan, with American help, forced the Israelis to provide the antidote for the poison, which would have killed Mr. Misha'al in 48 hours.

But I think it makes a difference in a larger sense as well, a difference pointed out by the brilliant reconstruction (in the International Herald Tribune, Oct. 9) by Barton Gellman. The Washington Post's Jerusalem correspondent, of the spraying of poison on Mr. Misha'al's skin as he walked toward his office in Amman on Sept. 25. One of the two Mossad agents posing as Canadian tourists "fell in behind" Mr. Misha'al as he left his car and extended an arm to the Hamas leader's left ear. From a lead-coloured instrument wrapped in tape

came a loud popping sound. Mr. Misha'al said, and a shivering sensation raced down his spine like an electric shock. The instrument disappeared during a car chase that ended with the capture of the two Israelis. Two hours later, Mr. Misha'al was taken violently ill. He hovered near death until the antidote was administered.

This attack by Mossad is incomprehensible, on the symbolic as well as the political level. Some symbols are so strong they dictate how we act toward other people and even how we think about them.

Some symbols are so strong they dictate how we act toward other people and even how we think about them. The two have been returned by Jordan in a big prisoner swap, and will now presumably disappear back into the shadows. But they should not be allowed to fade away without being asked — here if nowhere else — how they could have done this thing. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has to answer the same question at the political level, since he has taken overall responsibility for the operation. By staging the attack in King Hussein's territory, Mr. Netanyahu knowingly endangered his relations with the one Arab ruler who has genuinely made peace with Israel. Mr. Netanyahu has sought to make the question of the attack one of fighting terrorism or giving in to it. "The choice is either peace or terror," he said. "The targets we choose are just targets." But the truth is harsher for him.

The best that can be said for Mr. Netanyahu at this point is that he is fighting terrorism ineptly, unsuccessfully and at an intolerable political price for Israel. It is not necessary to debate his intentions, or Khaled Misha'al's alleged masterminding of terror operations. The costly failure of Israeli military operations into Lebanon in recent weeks was already eroding the image of Israeli intelligence as the supermen of the Middle East. The debacle in Amman raises even more serious questions about the judgement, skill and sense of their own history displayed by Israel's national security leaders.

The Washington Post

Globalisation's depredations
are real and brutal

By William Pfaff

THE UNITED States came under much criticism at the Hong Kong joint meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) because many in Asia hold Washington responsible for the crisis that has struck the region's currencies and markets.

When leaders such as Prime Minister Mahathir Bin Muhammad of Malaysia accuse Western speculators of responsibility for the crisis, Mr. Mahathir is usually held not to understand today's global economy. And it is true that Malaysia, Thailand and other Asian countries have brought many of these problems onto themselves through real estate speculation, uncontrolled bank credit, grandiose state projects and insider profiteering. They also have had considerable encouragement from abroad in their profligacy.

Nonetheless it is indispensable to understand that the United States is promoting a revolutionary remaking of international trade and markets, which in the short term mainly profits the West, and the long-term consequences of which remain profoundly uncertain. We do not know where this revolution will take us.

The politically correct description of this says that Washington's drive to reduce trade barriers and open up still more markets to international trade will eventually produce advantages for everyone, including the people in countries that may suffer a brutal short-term introduction to the international competition to drive manufacturing costs down and corporate profits up.

A politically incorrect description would say that globalisation is an American-inspired drive toward universal economic deregulation. The result of this deregulation not only lifts tariffs meant to protect local markets and producers but subjects small-country producers to an international competition they often are incapable of withstanding, tending to destroy the power of smaller governments to regulate their own economies, not to speak of their fiscal systems.

The latter is what the Malaysian prime minister is saying: Globalisation universalises the labour market, thereby undermining labour unions and labour standards in the advanced countries. It tends to render environmental regulations in those countries irrelevant by promoting the transfer of production and pollution to poorer countries or regions where environmental standards are weak or non-existent.

I am putting this very polemically, I know. But it is necessary to call a spade a bloody shovel when those who are promoting globalisation ignore the damage it does. Their promises of a radiant future too often rest on what amounts to an inversion of Marx's dialectical materialism, equally unscientific in its premises and equally utopian in its expectations.

Obviously trade produces benefits, above all when the countries exchanging goods are at roughly the same level of industrial development and have sophisticated economic structures and legal systems. The obvious examples of this mutually beneficial process include the European Single Market and trade between the United States and Europe and Japan.

But trade does not produce only benefits, and this is what people in Southeast Asia, and also in the less-developed Third World, are attempting to say. Dominant opinion in the West tends to dismiss the downside of trade deregulation by describing it as mere "creative destruction" (Schumpeter's expression is a favourite one). In the future all will be well. Alas, it seems, in a very distant future.

The economic transformation taking place today is extremely complex, and in social and political terms it could produce very destructive international consequences. The immense

variety of humanity's economic societies are being violently annexed into a Western economic monoculture, dominated by enormously powerful Western economic actors, whose motivation is simple to maximise return on investment.

Trade between the West and countries in the non-Western world may destroy subsistence agriculture, cooping Third World farmers into production for the international market- place while their societies are made dependent on imported foods. The social and cultural consequences of this may be very serious.

Resources may be pillaged, as is happening in Asia's forests. Local artisanal production can be wrecked by international competition, causing more unemployment than the new employment produced by international investment. When barriers between advanced and backward economies are destroyed, a new form of human exploitation can follow, resembling that of colonialism in the 19th and early 20th centuries, complete with new forms of indentured labour.

Listening to President Bill Clinton as he asks Congress for "fast track" negotiating powers, one would think that nothing but positive effects will follow the expansion of free-trade zones and further deregulation. It is time to recognise that the trade, labour and environmental regulations that globalisation undermines were put there in the past for a reason. Much of this regulation came about as a direct result of the rampant abuses and exploitation of the industrial and colonial systems of the 19th century. Do we really wish to restore the conditions for such abuses?

It is time for Congress to call a halt and to think. It is time to let the free trade groupings we already have come to maturity, so that we understand their longer-term implications. It is time to consider whether economic interest is our only interest.

Los Angeles Times

It is Arabrein not Judenrein

The American Committee on Jerusalem monitors and responds to articles, letters and editorials on Jerusalem that appear in the mainstream American media. Dr. Rashid Khalidi, director of the Center for International Studies at University of Chicago and A.C.J. president, submitted a letter to the editor of the New York Times on Oct. 9, 1997 responding to a letter from Dr. Irving Moskowitz, the Jewish American who has been purchasing large tracts of land in Arab East Jerusalem. Following is the text of Dr. Khalidi's letter:

IN HIS letter to the New York Times of Oct. 8, 1997, Dr. Irving Moskowitz defends his acquisitions of land in occupied Arab East Jerusalem, while complaining about a "double standard applied by the international community to the actions of Jews and Arabs." He cites a purchase by a sole Palestinian in a Jewish neighbourhood of Jerusalem as indicative of this double standard. Dr. Moskowitz omits mention of the massive restrictions on the purchase of property by Palestinians in both West and East Jerusalem.

The problem is not whether Jews have the right to live in East Jerusalem. Over 175,000 Jews live there today, most on land illegally confiscated by Israel.

The real issue is rather whether Palestinians have the right to live freely anywhere in Jerusalem. In West Jerusalem, where Palestinians owned the majority of the privately-owned land prior to 1948, restrictive conditions on purchas-

es of land by non-Jews are particularly onerous. This is because non-Jews are barred by law or in practice from purchasing or leasing Jewish National Fund property, "state land," or land under control of the Custodian of 'Absentee' Property (i.e., Arab-owned land seized after 1948). Most land in West Jerusalem falls into one of these categories.

Moreover, in 1978, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled against the attempt of a Palestinian, Muhammad Said Burqan, to lease a house — to which he held legal title — in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, thereby restricting residence there to Jews alone. Dr. Moskowitz was reported in the Times on Sept. 29 as being active in the acquisition of properties in the Old City's Muslim and Christian Quarters.

Thus while Dr. Moskowitz of Miami Beach can acquire property wherever he pleases in Jerusalem, with the power of the Israeli state and the majesty of its legal system backing him, native Palestinian Jerusalemites see their land confiscated, and are "legally" barred from buying or even leasing property in most of the city.

This will still be the case even if the funds promised by Palestinian, Arab and Islamic donors ever become available. It is cynical indeed that Dr. Moskowitz should demand that the "civilised world" object to "a Judenrein Jerusalem in any part or at any time," when what is really happening today is the creation of a larger and larger sphere of Jerusalem which is "Arabrein," thanks largely to the efforts of the good doctor and others like him.

LETTERS

So easily forgotten?

To the Editor:

HAS THE botched Hamas assassination attempt against two Israeli diplomatic personnel in Amman, Jordan on the Sept. 22 been so quickly forgotten? Are the Arab people — or anyone else for that matter — really so shocked that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would react accordingly? Israeli security's extreme extrajudicial intervention against Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al was not unexpected.

Rex Preston Stone
Amman

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to discuss. Letters intended for publication should contain writer's full name and preferably address. Names can be withheld upon request but only in special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Unhealthy
competition

By Jean-Claude L. Han

THEY say that the world is a marketplace. And it is. But the marketplace is not always a fair one. It is often a place where the strong devour the weak, where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. It is a place where the powerful use their power to create artificial barriers to entry, to protect their own interests at the expense of the rest of the world. It is a place where the rules are often written by the powerful to suit their own needs, and where the weak are often the victims of their own greed.

Save every day

October 16-17, 1997
mad Y. Majdoubeh
rmance

Society on the move

Changes still making the news

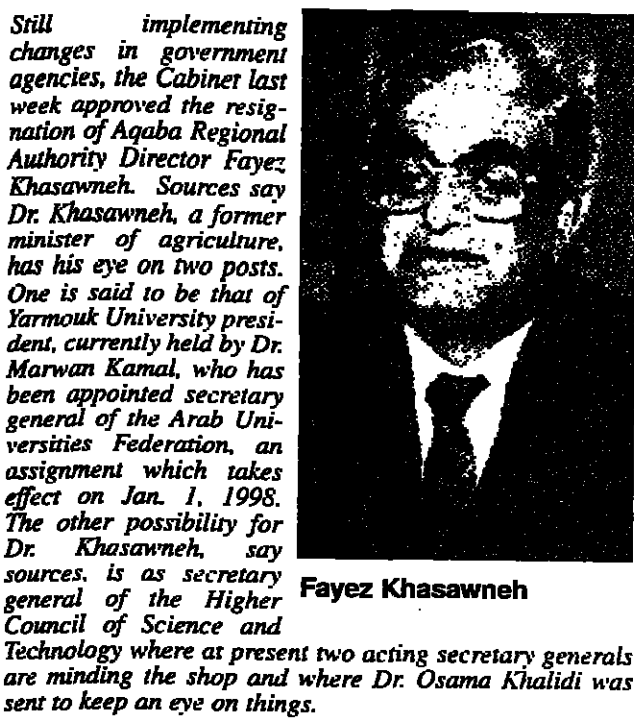
ly improve. But obviously, as society changes, we, teachers, as alike, need to act now. It is important for teachers to be good and writing, and not emphasize of writing skills. Another earlier stages to take writing habits. hat students do not, like had writing habits. nality level (and maybe even a been has been done, however Teachers, in other words, ma from the tenure track. When a few years ago, the first thing you should know, and let's say you should hold the racket, it is how you should swing it, it is how you should hit the ball, and so on. tudents come to writing class) with the assumption that they act they do not, there can be previous errors will continue. a good teacher will have to use habits, practice, methods, and

predations brutal

ing variety of business, social, and economic activities. The Jordanian economy is growing, but it is still a developing country. The government is trying to attract foreign investment and to improve the infrastructure. The private sector is becoming more active, but it still needs support from the government. The education system is improving, but it still needs more resources. The health system is also improving, but it still needs more resources. The environment is becoming more important, and the government is trying to protect it. The society is becoming more modern, but it still has many traditional values. The future is bright, but it needs more effort from everyone.

TTERS ly forgotten

Have a pleasant holiday here. I enjoyed my stay at the hotel. The service was excellent, and the food was delicious. I will definitely return next time. Thank you for a great stay. Sincerely, John Doe



Faye Khasawneh

Still implementing changes in government agencies, the Cabinet last week approved the resignation of Aqaba Regional Authority Director Faye Khasawneh. Sources say Dr. Khasawneh, a former minister of agriculture, has his eye on two posts. One is said to be that of Yarmouk University president, currently held by Dr. Marwan Kamal, who has been appointed secretary general of the Arab Universities Federation, an assignment which takes effect on Jan. 1, 1998. The other possibility for Dr. Khasawneh, say sources, is as secretary general of the Higher Council of Science and Technology where at present two acting secretary generals are minding the shop and where Dr. Osama Khalidi was sent to keep an eye on things.

the Middle East to find outlets for his magazine which is specialised in Islamic literature and is printed in Urdu and English. Based in Sialkot, Rida has a circulation of about 5,000 internationally. Mr. Hussein expressed a special affinity for Jordan and His Majesty King Hussein, particularly with regard to the common interests between Jordan and Pakistan in their Islamic traditions.

TAKING THE PRIZE: Mahmoud Rimawi, an Al Ra'i columnist, on Tuesday was awarded the Jerusalem Award for short story writing. His winning work is a collection of short stories entitled *Al Qitar* (the train). The award was part of the ceremony presented by Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish on behalf of the Palestinian National Authority to honour writers, artists and performers for their contributions to the history, culture and heritage of Palestine and thus its cause. The grand award was presented to Lebanese star vocalist Fairouz. The ceremony took place in Ramallah. Unfortunately Mr. Rimawi was unable to attend the ceremony to accept his award.

LOOK FOR HIM: Osama Shaha' has pulled his last column from the Al Ra'i presses and taken his opinions to Arab al Yawm. Mr. Shaha, who says his contributions to Al Ra'i were not always published, was made an attractive offer by Arab al Yawm. Meanwhile the owner of the Amman Bookshop on Prince Mohammad Street has been busy hosting book launchings at his shop. The most recent one was for a book written by Osama Khalidi, who, as was mentioned earlier, is now overseeing the activities of the Higher Council for Science and Technology.

AND A SIDE ORDER OF PICKLES! The idea of restaurateurs to float the prices of menu items at "popular" restaurants, which had folks worried about paying "designer" prices for a plate of hummus, is no longer an issue. Instead the government announced Tuesday that rather than allowing prices to float, it would set the price of these popular foods at the popular restaurants at a fixed but slightly higher rate. So frequenters of Hashim's can breathe a sigh of relief, the hike is not expected to be exorbitant. But for the restaurant owners who were pushing for the floatation method, the news was bitter. They find it "unfair" that they must pay floating prices for other products while their own remain controlled.

OCTOBER BLUES: In "A Rhythmic Celebration of America," American poet James Andrew Emanuel and American saxophonist Chansse Evans will put words to music in a poetry reading concert. Organized by the U.S. Embassy's American Centre the event will take place next Thurs. Oct. 23 at Books @ Cafe on Omar Ibn Al Khatib Street, better known as "Mango Street," in the First Circle. Emanuel and Evans will be visiting Jordan from October 23 to 27 and will conduct two workshops at the Ahlia School for Girls and the National Music Conservatory. At 20, Emanuel became the confidential secretary of the U.S.' first African American army general, Benjamin O. Davis. He is a graduate of Howard University (B.A.), Northwestern University (M.A.) and Columbia University (Ph.D.) in



Above we have none other than Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi (he's the one not wearing the lederhosen) with the members of the Hans Loehner Band from Hersbruck, said to be the heart of Bavaria. The group is in Amman to perform for the German Oktoberfest, sponsored by the German Embassy, Lufthansa, BMW and Safeway. The band, acting on behalf of Hersbruck Mayor Wolfgang Platmeier, presented Dr. Abbadi with the Hersbruck City Shield. The Oktoberfest celebrations, continue tonight at the Hotel InterContinental

1966 he introduced the study of African American poetry at the City College of the City University of New York. His concert partner Evans was born in South Carolina and grew up and was educated in Seattle, Washington. He lived and worked in Europe after his military service and studies at University of Washington. While completing his B.Sc. in music and philosophy he took courses under Joe Brazil. Playing the tenor saxophone, Evans has evolved "an original style, rhythm and melodic base, which he calls 'an athenian musical system.'" The performance next week starts at 7:00 p.m.

velvet embroidery. She has showed in Paris, London, Rome, Washington, Brussels, Cairo, Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The show is organised by the hotel under the patronage of HRH Princess Aisha Bint Al Hussein and part of the proceeds will be donated to Al Hussein Society for the Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped. Tickets can be purchased at the InterContinental.

SURPRISE, SURPRISE: As we went to print we received the happy news that Rita and Salameh Ne'mati (Al Hayat correspondent in Amman and former J.T. reporter) are the proud parents of their second baby boy. Mother and son are doing very well. And, oh yes, Faisal's little brother is named Karim.

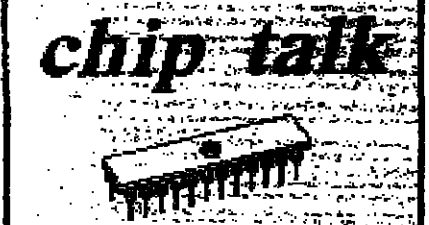
Jennifer Hamarneh

MEDITERRANEAN RUNWAY: The Embassy of Turkey is presenting a fashion show by Turkish designer Zihnal Yorgancioglu on Oct. 24 and 25. The event will take place at the InterContinental Hotel, and Mrs. Yorgancioglu's designs are to be modelled by professional models from Turkey. Her fashions include gowns, caftans in silk,

Unhealthy competition

By Jean-Claude Elias

THEY SAY that competition in business is a healthy phenomenon. It usually contributes to improved quality products and reduced prices. The end-user often is the one who benefits from such a situation. But the number of PC and PC-related products suppliers in Jordan has recently grown disproportionate with the country's active population. Members of the professional computer community now say that instead of having one supplier for every few thousand, for each inhabitant there are two or three suppliers. This is a very sarcastic — and much exaggerated — declaration which reflects the despair of most vendors. Jordan is a very price-sensitive market. The profit margin that PC vendors usually can afford is very narrow. When tough competition is added, this margin becomes ridiculously low. Buyers do not realise that when they purchase a Pentium PC at about JD1,000, the computer company makes a profit of JD150 in the best case, and as little as JD50 in the worst. "Best" and "worst" here are from the vendor's point of view of course. From the buyer's point of view it is just the opposite. Considering the 300 or more PC suppliers (including hardware, software and services providers) in the Kingdom, such incredibly low profits become understandable. While they certainly hurt suppliers, one wonders if they really serve the user at all.



Because of the very nature of the hardware and the complexity of the software, PCs are subject to all kinds of problems ranging from pure technical failures to virus attacks and inoperability of programmes. A computer vendor is supposed to ensure a decent after-sales service. But how can one expect to receive good service when the vendor is making only a five per cent profit and has to give a 12-month warranty to its customers on top of the deal? Whatever saving the buyer makes at purchase time, he/she runs the risk of paying more later on in terms of bad or simply non-existing service. There are of course suppliers who refuse to sell at less than, say, a 12 per cent profit margin. They are but a minority. In Europe or the U.S., low profit margins are compensated by large sales volumes. This is unfortunately not the case in our country. The Jordan Computer Society (JCS), the only association of computer professionals in the Kingdom, is unable to help, and every year it sees several computer suppliers close down their business. Still the demand on PC equipment remains high, and trade shows like the METS (Middle East Technology Show), organized by JCS, attract a huge crowd. Though it won't change the highly competitive situation in the country, METS '97 will take place from November 13 to 16 at the International Fair Hall in Marj Al Hamam. Chip Talk will report on the show.

Tourists want to feel, not see, the pyramids

By Eileen Alt Powell
The Associated Press

CAIRO. — At night, long after most tourists have left the pyramids, the tombs of Egypt's ancient pharaohs echo with the chanting, dancing and praying of travellers seeking a touch of the psychic. They are coming in increasing numbers — often carrying oils to anoint themselves or crystals to measure the spiritual power of the great monuments. They want to feel the pyramids rather than to see them. "It's a spiritual journey to the source of all original wisdom," said Jill Vander Veen, 48, a calligrapher from Johannesburg, South Africa, after meditating in the burial chamber of the great pyramid. The granite crypt is at the end of a steep wooden ramp. The air is dank and still. Even a whisper resonates off the stone walls and empty sarcophagus of the Pharaoh Cheops. The darkness is so complete that those centimetres apart can't see each other. Yet in this void, Ms. Vander Veen and others describe mystical experiences — brilliant flashes of light, strange voices from far away, a sense of supernatural forces moving around them. These spiritual visitors are the heaviest users of Egypt's "Rent-a-Pyramid"

programme, which gives tour groups after-hours access to the pharaonic tombs at a cost of \$600 for three hours. Some 5,000 people bought time last year, and even more are expected to this year. The archaeologists responsible for the great pyramids at the Giza plateau on Cairo's

People like to dream, and they want to tie their dreams to the most important symbols of the ancient world. We're willing to accommodate that.

western edge have mixed feelings about the trend. "People like to dream, and they want to tie their dreams to the most important symbols of the ancient world," says Zahi Hawass, the supervisor at Giza. "We're willing to accommodate that." But Mr. Hawass and other Egyptologists are disturbed that many of the spiritualists are being drawn by "New

Age" theorists who seem bent on rewriting the history of ancient Egypt. Archaeologists say the Giza pyramids were laboriously built with primitive tools by Egyptian workers for pharaohs Cheops, Chephren and Mycerinus about 4,500 years ago. Some New Agers cealed in the great structures. "They are trying to steal our history," Mr. Hawass shouts when asked about these theories. "We have found no evidence of any lost civilisation," he says. "Everything around the pyramids dates it to the 4th dynasty in 2500 B.C. — the pottery, the tombs of the workers, the tools we've found, Everything." Mr. Hawass and New Age author John Anthony West of Athens, New York, have had bitter exchanges about the ancient monuments on the very modern medium of the Internet. Mr. West accuses the American-educated archaeologist of blocking research that might challenge traditional scholarship and calls him a scorpion. "Hawass belittles West and his supporters as 'pyramidiotis'." Mr. West has a much-disputed theory that the Sphinx at Giza is also far older than believed. He says the weathering of the stones was not due to wind and sand, but to heavy rain and floods the likes of which haven't hit the Egyptian desert since about 9000 BC. An organiser of meditation sessions in the pyramids, Mr. West says his followers find in Egypt "the source of unparalleled art and architecture generated by a profound and sacred science we are only just beginning to understand." The modern-day spiritualists are following in the footsteps of people drawn for centuries by the power of Egypt's ancient religion, with its intriguing gods and promise of a rich after-life. Astrologists have tried to depict the great pyramids' shafts and tunnels as guides to the stars. Mathematicians have developed sophisticated "maps" of the world based on the monuments. Rainer Stadelmann, head of the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, sees the new theories as "just more pseudo-science" echoing old ideas. "It comes like a flu," he said, "and after 10 years, goes away." Tour guide Mohammed Abdel-Razak doesn't get excited about how New Agers view Egypt, even those who think they once lived as Cleopatra, the Pharaoh Ramses II, temple priestesses — even ancient gods. "They love Egypt, they come and they spend money," he says. "Why shouldn't we be nice to them?"

Save water ...
every drop counts!

IMF: Egypt needs to trim local debt and raise savings

CAIRO (R) — Egypt needs to trim its domestic debt and increase savings to further enhance the country's economic prospects, IMF and Egyptian officials have said.

"The improvement in the fiscal position has been the pivotal element in Egypt's success in promoting stabilisation," said Howard Handy, assistant director of the Middle Eastern Department at the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"Efforts are being made under the government's programme to consolidate the progress in stabilisation and to broaden the base of economic reform by liberalising the economy... and strengthening the role of the private sector," he told a seminar.

The IMF has backed privatisation and economic reforms in Egypt, which the country has pursued in earnest since early in 1996.

Mr. Handy said these efforts have "greatly enhanced prospects for the Egyptian economy for the medium term. Testimony to that is the large increase in domestic and foreign investment that we have witnessed in the last year."

Economy Minister Youssef Boutros-Ghali said last month that developing savings and investment was central to Egypt's future.

Officials say direct invest-

ment in the economy was \$1.3 billion in 1996 and was expected to grow this year.

"There is still a long way to go. Higher investment needs more domestic savings. While the larger share of the additional savings will come from the private sector, a stronger public sector savings performance will also be required," Mr. Handy said.

Egypt has reduced its domestic and foreign debt to about 95 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) now from 147 per cent of GDP in 1990/91, Mr. Handy said.

Egypt's privatisation drive will contribute to the government's financing resources, and if used to retire domestic debt, "it will further enhance the fiscal outlook," he added.

"In the medium term, a surplus in the primary balance and the high growth rate, which will feed into higher revenue for the government, are expected to lead to a further reduction in government debt to around 65 per cent of GDP by 2001/02," he said.

The 1997/98 budget forecast foreign and domestic debt servicing costs at 23.5 billion pounds (\$6.9 billion).

Finance Minister Mohamed Al Gharib said servicing the domestic debt,

which economists have put at 130 billion pounds, was very expensive, and Egypt was rescheduling part of it.

"We are addressing the local debt by rescheduling it through limiting new issues of short-term T-bills. We also now issue one-year bills and there is a trend to issue bonds for terms ranging from five to seven years," Mr. Gharib told the seminar.

"The proceeds will be used to buy back T-bills, which carry higher interest rates," the minister said.

At another seminar, the World Bank representative to Cairo said here Egypt should let the private sector handle future infrastructure projects on a build-own-operate-transfer system.

Khalid Ikram told AFP at the end of a World Bank-organised build-own-operate-transfer seminar that he expected Egypt to follow this route.

"I would expect so ... Egypt is moving forward toward only private participation in infrastructure," he said.

Mr. Ikram said he met the finance minister and expects to hold talks with the ministers of planning and tourism and with the governor of the central bank.

At the moment, only one infrastructure project is being entrusted to the pri-

vate sector, the \$600 million Sidi Krir electrical power station west of the Mediterranean port of Alexandria.

The World Bank is offering guarantees to the companies bidding for the contract to cover political risk.

"Essentially we are saying to the private sector the government will do what it told you it will do. If the government does not do that, and the private sector loses money, as a consequence then we will pay the private sector," he said.

The World Bank has been offering guarantees to cover political risk for several years for infrastructure projects handled by the private sector, especially in the field of energy.

The guarantee allows companies to get financing at a lower cost and in turn, to be able to charge consumers less for electricity.

With its past of a planned economy and tradition of public financing of major projects, Egypt is still trying to find its way and the private sector has hesitated to commit itself, Mr. Ikram said.

For the Sidi Krir project, "most of the bidders have said that if the World Bank would not provide a guarantee, they would not be participating," he added.

The contract will be awarded in March.

Pakistan devalues the rupee by over 8%

KARACHI (AFP) — Pakistan devalued its rupee Wednesday by 8.71 per cent against the dollar to boost exports and fulfill International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions for loans, officials and business leaders said.

The country's central bank, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), fixed the new exchange rate at 44.05 rupees to the dollar, up from 40.52 on Tuesday, SBP officials said.

The devaluation triggered a rush for the dollar on the open market, as the price of the dollar shot up to 44.25 rupees, money dealers said.

It promptly gave a boost to trading at the country's main bourse, Karachi Stock Exchange (KSE), dealers said, but there was mixed reaction from business leaders, with several doubting the move would

help the economy. Dealers said the KSE 100-Index surged by 61.50 points to 1973.85.

Osama Ben Shoaib, an analyst at a leading brokerage house here, said the devaluation was a major item in the economic reforms agreed by the Pakistan government with the IMF.

Pakistan is seeking \$1.6 billion in loans from the IMF over three years to shore up its reserves.

"Foreign investors will now come in a big way to the stock market as devaluation was the only conditionality left for obtaining \$1.6 billion under IMF's Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility," Mr. Shoaib said.

Officials said exporters had generally been demanding the devaluation, which is the fifth adjustment in the rupee

value since April.

After recent downward adjustment of European currencies against the greenback, exports to Europe had been affected, they said.

Abdul Shakoor Khatri, a leading textile exporter, said the devaluation would give some boost to exports.

But in reality "it will cost us more by increasing production costs in dearer imports of capital goods and raw material." The country's foreign debt burden will also increase, he said.

Zubair Motiwalla, another forefront exporter, disagreed with his colleague, saying the devaluation should have come much earlier.

The exports will "definitely" go up, Mr. Motiwalla said. Iqbal Zaidi, a money changer, said the foreign

exchange market had reacted positively to the devaluation and other sectors of the economy would also get a boost.

"People who have hoarded dollars in anticipation of devaluation will now come to the market to earn huge profits," Mr. Iqbal said.

Iqbal Haidri, an economist, criticised the devaluation, saying the decision had been taken without realising the possible "consequences" on the national economy.

"I fail to understand the logic behind this devaluation. The government is ruining the entire economy to save the textile sector," Mr. Haidri said.

"What will happen to the imports of wheat, edible oil and petroleum products and debt servicing?" he asked.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES:

(March 21 to April 19) Don't get depressed today if annoying matters develop at your career activities. Don't lose your composure or you could find yourself in a difficult situation which can be interpreted as not being successful.

TAURUS:

(April 20 to May 20) Plan your time well today to take every advantage of information provided to you by some knowledgeable person. Transfer personal matters to the evening and handle them wisely at this time so there won't be any difficulty.

GEMINI:

(May 21 to June 21) You can make big headway in the outside world today, so don't permit home affairs to deter your progress. Later this evening will be quite beneficial if you seek out the advice of a knowledgeable person concerning tasks.

MOON CHILDREN:

(June 22 to July 21) Come to a better understanding with a fellow associate and thereby you can eliminate any difficulties. Try not to get excited later this evening concerning your career activities and take it easy in the days ahead.

LEO:

(July 22 to August 21) Plan time to soothe a good close friend today who is having difficulties with domestic affairs, however, don't get so involved that you neglect your own career activities. Tonight take time for romance and happiness with your mate.

VIRGO:

(August 22 to September 22) Study whatever is occurring at home today so that you can overtly any difficulties which could be present. Straighten out these affairs for the better. Later this evening try to please your loved ones and thereby enjoy their company.

LIBRA:

(September 23 to October 22) You may get news today which is disturbing, however, cooperation from close friends can make things better. Don't take risks later this evening with your reputation or you could find yourself in quite a difficulty.

SCORPIO:

(October 23 to November 21) After a busy day today, seek a delightful close friend who has suggestions for some fun activities. You can gain long-term wishes with relative ease if you follow the advice of a knowledgeable person who is successful.

SAGITTARIUS:

(November 22 to December 21) Try not to criticise one today who is influential or you could find yourself in quite a difficult position. Show your real ability to those in authority and that you are quite capable to handle any career oriented situation in the days ahead.

CAPRICORN:

(December 22 to January 20) Don't get into a new outlet today which could cause you to lose out with a project you have been labouring on for sometime. Later this evening will be good for plan recreational activities with your close friends.

AQUARIUS:

(January 21 to February 19) Don't try to force some personal pleasure on your loved ones or close friends or you could find yourself in a difficult position. See important people you know later this evening and gain a favour which can be productive.

PISCES:

(February 20 to March 20) Don't disagree with superiors today or you could lose out materially where it truly counts. A personal desire can be gained tonight if you have thoroughly considered every angle of your career activities in the days ahead.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES:

(March 21 to April 19) Bring your talents to the attention of influential people and gain support and prestige which you desire. Protect your interests later this evening and you can thereby gain the assistance of a bigwig.

TAURUS:

(April 20 to May 20) Be alert to whatever is happening around you today and seize fine opportunity to advance at this time. Later this evening will be good for you to consult with a knowledgeable person concerning your career activities.

GEMINI:

(May 21 to June 21) Give some attention today to your mate which will be appreciated and will be reciprocated back in increased affection by him or her. Make the right arrangements later this evening to go out on the town with close friends.

MOON CHILDREN:

(June 22 to July 21) Contact fellow associates today who are most practical in their thinking and can make your career activities quite successful. This is a good time later this evening to gain greater prestige in the outside world.

LEO:

(July 22 to August 21) You can labour most productively today so don't waste a moment's time at any constructive endeavours. Later this evening you can go out on the town with loved ones and have a good time with recreations which are fun.

VIRGO:

(August 22 to September 22) This is a good day today to plan the amusements which you like so that you can enjoy them any time and day. Later this evening can be quite beneficial if you seek out the advice of a knowledgeable person which is resourceful.

LIBRA:

(September 23 to October 22) You have been planning to make changes at home today, so start at this time and you can make your residence a place to invite close friends to relax and be comfortable. Have a happy evening with fellow associates.

SCORPIO:

(October 23 to November 21) Contact those persons who can assist you today in your career activities. Be sure to answer important letter later this evening, especially if they concern any information inquiries from those in authority who are of assistance.

SAGITTARIUS:

(November 22 to December 21) Financial and other practical matters should be put first today since they can make you quite successful in the days ahead. Be charming and polite to fellow associates who have offered to assist you with a current project.

CAPRICORN:

(December 22 to January 20) You feel sure of yourself today and you can gain whatever you sincerely wish of a personal nature. Later this evening will be good for obtaining information concerning a new project which is important to your success.

AQUARIUS:

(January 21 to February 19) Stop all that daydreaming today and get right down to the brass tacks of career activities which have been put aside for some time. Plan personal aims quietly later this evening and say nothing until you are sure of the outcome.

PISCES:

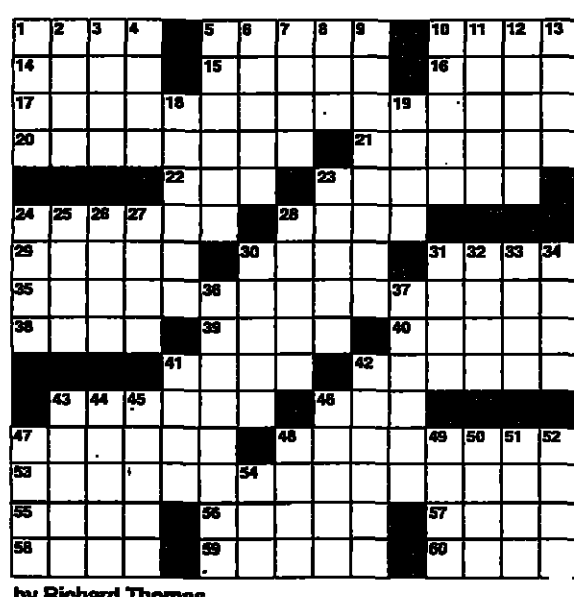
(February 20 to March 20) Do whatever will please the one you love tonight and thereby you will gain much affection from him or her. Today is the day that you can truly be happy together, so long as there isn't any difficulties in your lives.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

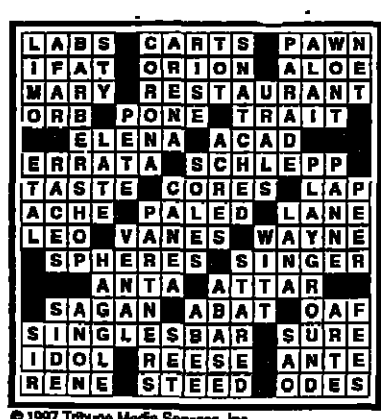
THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Fiber
- 5 Indian clothing
- 10 Prey's spray
- 14 Spanish stream
- 15 Put in power
- 16 Not near
- 17 Cats
- 20 Gave
- 21 Categories
- 22 Supply workers
- 23 Underhanded
- 24 Walk casually
- 25 Kind of stool
- 28 Star hunter
- 30 Rel.
- 31 Denomination
- 32 Burn a bit
- 35 Cats
- 36 Pub selection
- 38 Part of B.P.O.E.
- 40 Crime code
- 41 John, James or Tyne
- 42 Close
- 43 Indigenous
- 46 Cat coat
- 47 Oscar-winning actress
- 48 Lawman
- 53 Cats
- 55 Qualified
- 56 "Cabaret" director, Bob
- 57 Field sport
- 58 Marsh plant
- 59 Deceptive one
- 60 Utter



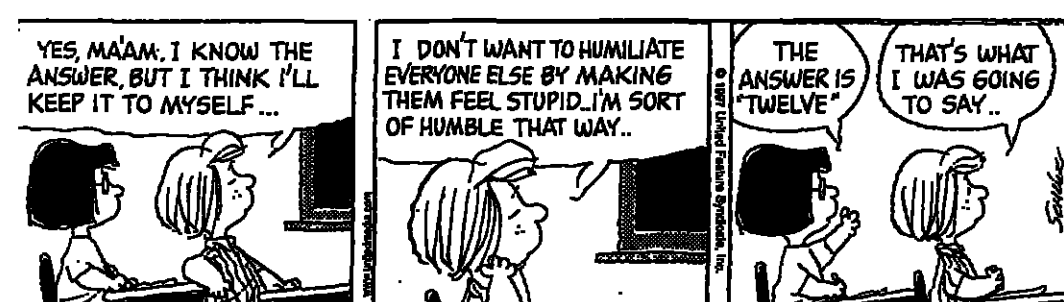
by Richard Thomas



LABS CARTS PAWN
IFAT ORION ALOE
MARY RESTAURANT
ORB PONE TRAIT
ELENA ACAD
ERRATA SCHLEPP
TASTE CORES LAP
ACHE PALED LANE
LEO VAMES WAYNE
SPHERES SINGER
ANTA ATTAR
SAGAN ABAT OAF
SINGLESBAR SURE
IDOL REESE ANTE
RENE STEED ODES

23 Campus group
24 Den furniture
25 Asian sea
26 Location
27 Brewer's buy
28 In poor taste
30 Most attractive girl
31 "Silkwood" star
32 Deer
33 Medina dweller
34 Bank (on)
35 Cease
36 Scattered
37 Force
38 Bulpen member
39 Mythical weeper
40 Sufficient
41 Played (with)
42 Disloyal
43 Wound reminder
44 Disguise
45 Publicize
46 Speck
47 Caron role
48 Pickle
49 Extinct avian

Peanuts



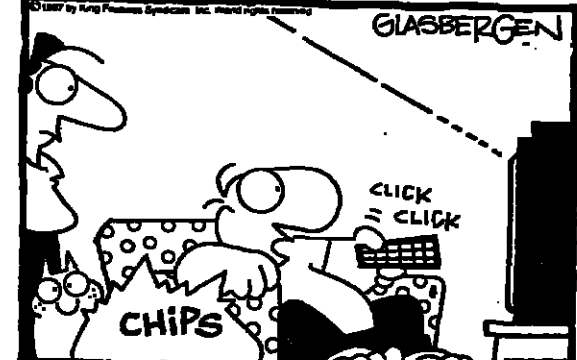
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff

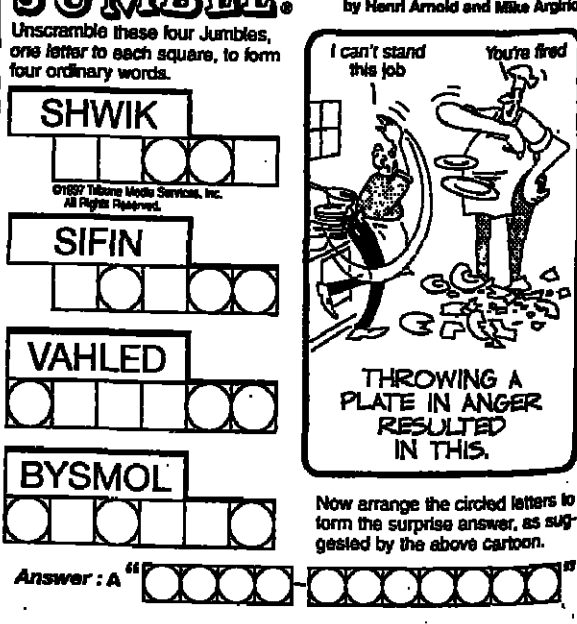


THE BETTER HALF.



"They say a giant asteroid might smash into Earth one day...let's pray it doesn't happen during a good program!"

JUMBLE.



Business Daily

Minister of health medical m...

REUTERS

The Business of...

VA - Equity...

DAJ

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Minister of health cautions against 'medical mafia market'

**** HAVING RECEIVED** many complaints, Health Minister Ashraf Kurdi has cautioned against a "medical mafia market" that continues to attract sick people from abroad for medical treatment at certain hospitals or at the hands of specific doctors with the sole aim of exploiting those persons and not of providing them with medical care and treatment. He said he had held a meeting with the owners of private hospitals to try to stop and control these unethical operations.

The minister said an agreement was reached to give the private sector the benefit of treating sick persons coming from abroad through proper means and providing them with full medical services. Dr. Kurdi added that a committee was formed at the time from all concerned parties to ensure that the patients are given the necessary services upon their arrival at the airport until their departure.

Dr. Kurdi referred to waste and useless expenditure and stressed that all unnecessary spending at the ministry should be stopped, especially sending people

abroad for medical treatment. He indicated that the Ministry of Health has specified the number of those who are to be transferred abroad for treatment at no more than "the fingers on one hand" because medical technology and treatment in the Kingdom are at equal level with those elsewhere outside.

"It is illogical that the ministry bear a JD80,000 cost for the treatment of a child who was sent abroad for two months and returned without completing her treatment. She was later admitted to a hospital in the Kingdom and underwent the necessary operations for only JD200," the minister said. As such, the ministry has decided to stop sending abroad patients who require gamma knife operations because the necessary equipment is available in Jordan.

Dr. Kurdi concluded by saying that the Ministry of Health was able to obtain a 40 per cent discount for treating patient on the gamma knife equipment in Jordan (Al Ra'i).

Swiss firm helps Jordan upgrade grain silos

AMMAN (Petra) — after a three-year grace period. The agreement was signed by Industry, Trade and Supply Minister Hani Mulki and the manager of the Swiss firm Bohler as well as the Swiss ambassador to Jordan, Gian Federico Pedotti.

In remarks after the signing ceremony, Dr. Mulki said the agreement, which is to be implemented in 14 months, aims at upgrading the work of the silos and modernising three types of equipment used in loading and unloading the grain at Agaba, with a view to speeding up delivery.

Dr. Mulki said: "No doubt these equipment are bound to boost Jordan's import and export capabilities and benefit both the private and public sectors. The Swiss ambassador said the signing of the agreement will reflect positively on the bilateral relation."

Lebanese businessmen hold trade fair in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (R) — Lebanese industrialists and businessmen held a trade fair in Baghdad on Tuesday in the hope of striking trade deals under Iraq's oil-for-food accord with the United Nations.

More than 80 Lebanese companies are taking part, exhibiting goods ranging from foodstuffs to industrial machines, from clothing to canned food and medicines.

"We have come to break the (U.N.) sanctions on the brotherly Iraq," said Khassan Nabulsi, deputy head of the Beirut Industrialists Union.

Mohammad Taher Al Hayali, the Iraqi head of the organising committee, said more than 250 Lebanese businessmen were taking part in the fair, accompanied by representatives of the Lebanese ministries of agriculture, industry and trade.

The fair is the first in Baghdad since Beirut severed ties with Iraq in 1994, after accusing Iraqi diplomats of murdering an Iraqi dissident in the Lebanese capital.

The organisers said they hoped to strike deals with Iraqi traders within the framework of Iraq's oil deal with the United Nations for goods like washing machines, electrical pumps and printing materials, as well as medical and veterinary equipment.

The deal, which took effect last December, lets Iraq sell \$2 billion of oil every six months to buy humanitarian goods.

Last week a 12-member Iraqi delegation headed by the Chairman of Iraq's Chamber of Commerce Adnan Al Qudis went to Lebanon for meetings with officials and visits to factories. A Lebanese business and industry delegation visited Baghdad in May.

In September, a row over the pan-Arab games led to the Lebanese government refusing to grant Iraqi athletes visas to enter Lebanon, and this in turn prompted Iraq to cancel a trade visit to Beirut.

But the countries soon bridged their differences and resumed trade ties and exchanges.

Jordanian businessmen to attend conference in Beirut

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA) announced Wednesday that it will take part in the seventh Arab Conference for Investors and Businessmen which will be held in Beirut between Oct. 18 and 20 under the patronage of Lebanon's President Elias Hrawi.

JBA Chairman Hamdi Tabbaa will head the four-member Jordanian delegation to the meeting which, according to the announcement, will be organised by the Arab League in conjunction with the Federation of Arab Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture.

The announcement said the conference aims to strengthen ties among Arab businessmen, open the door for further meetings among investors, enable the investors and businessmen to find partners in joint projects and to enable the participating countries to examine obstacles that impede the flow of capital for investment purposes.

The JBA said in another statement that it has now put the finishing touches to a programme of a seminar entitled "The Jordanian-European Association — Partnership in Development" which the JBA is organising in conjunction with the European Union (EU) on Nov. 24-26, 1997 at the Regency Palace Hotel in Amman.

The statement noted that the convening of the seminar will coincide with the formal signing of the Jordanian-European association agreement at the EU headquarters in Brussels.

It said the seminar will include six sessions covering the main features of the association agreement. Specifically, the seminar will focus on the Jordanian and European views and the impact of the agreement on businesses like pharmaceuticals, tourism and agricultural exports.

The European-Tunisian association experiment will be presented to the seminar which will review several working papers dealing with a wide range of topics, according to the statement.

The JBA will shortly send out invitations to the JBA members and the concerned firms and organisations to take part in the seminar which is expected to be attended by 200 Jordanian businessmen.


REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 15/10/97 18:15									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CHF	HKD	SGD	THB	MYR
US Dollar	0.5714	1.7501	0.6181	1.4598	121.35	1.3870	1.7720	1.9716	5.8975
DE Mark	0.5714	1.7501	0.6181	1.4598	121.35	1.3870	1.7720	1.9716	5.8975
GB Sterling	1.6230	2.8415	0.3518	0.8338	99.33	0.7920	0.7773	1.1284	3.3521
CHF Franc	0.5681	1.7388	0.6216	1.4415	120.23	1.3741	1.7620	1.9616	5.8602
JP Yen	0.0082	1.4415	0.5072	1.2023	—	1.1417	1.409	1.6239	4.8902
CA Dollar	0.7210	1.2660	0.4471	1.0565	3.14	—	1.2474	1.4237	4.2527
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0216	0.3595	0.8852	1412.63	0.8095	—	11.51	3.4230
NL Guilder	0.5072	0.8773	0.3122	0.7402	61.50	0.7031	0.8700	—	2.9730
FR Franc	0.1704	0.2983	0.1048	0.2474	20.66	0.2362	33.59	33.5900	—

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CHF	HKD	SGD	THB	MYR
US Dollar	0.7080	3.7504	0.3770	3.6402	0.3040	3.6728	1.5360	3.3996	—
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	—	5.2922	0.3325	5.1415	0.4264	5.1875	2.1549	4.8017
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1888	—	0.1005	0.97	0.0811	0.98	408.56	0.0665
Bahrain Dinar	2.85	1.3790	9.9480	—	9.65	0.2084	9.74	4074.27	9.0178
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1845	1.0303	1.0303	—	0.0835	1.01	421.85	0.8338
Kuwait Dinar	3.2895	2.2269	12.3369	1.2401	11.97	—	12.05	5052.63	0.8338
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1828	1.0211	1.0228	0.9911	0.0828	—	418.21	0.9256
Lebanese 1000	0.85	0.4609	2.4417	0.2454	2.3639	0.1979	2.3911	—	2.2133
Egyptian	0.2942	0.2083	1.1032	0.1109	1.0708	1.0804	451.82	—	—

Energy			Mid-East Currencies				
Oil:	Last	Revised	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	YEN
Brent	19.64	19.48	SA Riyal	0.0366	0.4687	0.1849	0.39832
W. Texas	21.31	20.72	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.6777	0.18778	0.37975
Bonny	19.64	19.48	KU Dinar	3.2985	5.75705	2.02675	4.90307
Dubai	18.54	18.10	BY Dinar	0.9770	0.464253	1.63425	3.67289
Ural	19.58	197.00	CH Pound	1.9822	3.7274	1.1866	2.8128
							233.615



**"The PTA of the
International Community School,
would like to sincerely thank all who
contributed to the great success of
the International Food Fair on Friday,
10th October, - to the Stall Holders,
Exhibitors & Helpers who worked
hard during the day; to everyone who
attended and to all who sponsored
the event in any way with their
generous donations, prizes, etc.
Thank you."**

Iran repeats spying charges against U.S.

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran repeated accusations Wednesday that the United States spied on Iranian naval forces conducting manoeuvres in the Gulf.

Ashkbus Danesh-Kar, the coordinator of naval operations, said three U.S. destroyers and warships backed by aircraft, including an Airborne Warning and Control (AWACS) radar surveillance plane, tried to eavesdrop and collect information on the equipment and tactics used in the Iranian exercises.

He said U.S. intelligence gathering efforts had increased since Monday when the Iranian manoeuvres entered a "sensitive phase."

But the official said all U.S. efforts at intelligence gathering had been frustrated as Iranian forces could "deceive the enemy."

"We successfully conducted our tests on the new systems we use," he added.

The Iranian press reported that during the military exercises Iran had successfully tested a pilotless stealth reconnaissance aircraft capable of evading radar detection.

Iran's Navy chief Admiral Abbas Mohtaj said Monday that Iranian forces had warned away a "spying" U.S. warship, adding that the incident "shows that the Americans seek to create tension in the region."

The Iranian exercises, dubbed Victory-8, involve some 50 vessels equipped with missiles, destroyers, fighter bombers and submarines.

They are designed to test the "defence capacity" of Iran's Naval resources in the region and serve as "a counter-offensive against attacks by a fictitious enemy."

Iran's sea exercises are due to extend as far as the limit of Kuwait's territorial waters.

Meanwhile, two U.S. B-1 bombers headed home from the Gulf Tuesday amid declining U.S. concern over Iraqi "no-fly zone" violations and the Iranian exercises.

Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said Baghdad had taken no provocative actions in several days and that Iran's naval exercises had posed no threat to U.S. warships in the Gulf.

"We have seen no suggestion that they want to confront U.S. in any way, no suggestion that they want to cause any problems to our regular deployments throughout the Gulf," Mr. Bacon said.

The USS Nimitz arrived in the Gulf at the weekend after being rushed to the region five days ahead of schedule in response to Iraqi violations of a southern "no-fly zone" that Washington saw as a prelude to renewed tensions.

Iran says it has flown a homemade stealth plane

TEHRAN (AP) — Iran has successfully tested a domestically built unmanned stealth plane, the Iran News said Wednesday, the latest in a series of claims to demonstrate the country's increasing military prowess.

The English-language newspaper said the new plane was test flown during the 10-day naval manoeuvres that began Saturday. The claim could not be independently confirmed.

Iran News quoted naval spokesman Rear Adm. Ashkbus Daneshkar as saying the aircraft had Stealth capabilities that allowed it to evade radar detection.

The plane could "conduct

reconnaissance missions and was capable of detecting other flying unmanned aircraft within its range, taking photos and transmitting information about their place, movement and speed," he claimed.

Claims that Iran, which was previously known only to have a fledgling aviation industry, has made great strides in its aviation and missile industries have not been independently verified.

Last month, Iran reported that it has started mass production of the region's first fighter-bomber, and last week it said it now has the capability to build anti-aircraft missiles with a range

of 250 kilometres. Former President Hashemi Rafsanjani said this was significantly greater than the missiles Iran could build during the 1980-88 war with Iraq, which only had a range of about 30 kilometres.

Iran's claims come at a time of increased tension with the United States, highlighted by the presence of a U.S. fleet in the Gulf to enforce a "no-fly zone" over southern Iraq. Iran's fighter jets were reported to have violated the zone on Sept. 29, followed by further incursions by pursuing Iraqi jets.

Turkish court jails former Islamist mayor for protest

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish court on Wednesday jailed a former Islamist mayor for more than four years for calling for the implementation of Islamic law at an anti-Israeli protest he organised.

Ankara State Security Court found Bekir Yildiz guilty for "aiding and abetting an armed gang" and "provoking hatred and animosity among people by showing differences of region, class, religion or race."

Mr. Yildiz, a member of the Islam-based Welfare Party, was sentenced a total of four years and seven months in prison. Court

officials did not say which armed gang he abetted.

At the same trial, Nurettin Sirin, editor of the small Islamic daily Selam, was sentenced to 17 1/2 years in jail for being a member of the armed Turkish Hizbullah group.

Mr. Yildiz was charged in February after organising a protest night in Ankara's Sincan district in which he and Iran's ambassador spoke on a stage draped with a banner of the late leader of the Palestinian group, Islamic Jihad.

Turkish media and secularists at the time accused Mr. Yildiz of making a speech in favour of turning

officially secular Turkey into an Islamic state. He was later removed from his post.

Mr. Yildiz denied the charges during the trial proceedings. The event, known as "Jerusalem Night," was a bone of contention between the secularist establishment and the then government of Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan.

Tanks toured Sincan several days after the protest in a warning to the Islamists. Mr. Erbakan resigned in June after a row with the army over an alleged religious upsurge in the public life.

5 dead in attacks in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — Two people were killed by suspected Islamists in a bomb attack on a train in central Algeria, newspapers reported Wednesday.

The bomb exploded Tuesday as the train was coming out of a tunnel, the Al Khabar newspaper reported, adding that several people were injured and two of the train's wagons derailed.

Another daily reported that in a separate incident Sunday in a tiny hamlet near Saida, 300 kilometres southwest of the capital Algiers, three people were slain by extremists from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) after the local leader asked residents if they had failed to make their daily prayers.

"Two children raised their hand and despite their young age, they were killed," the paper said, adding that a third resident also had his throat slit.

Al Watan added that the

army was pursuing raids against insurgents in the forest region of Ouacifs, some 30 kilometres from the ethnic Berber stronghold of Tizi-Ouzou in eastern Algeria.

The region is home to an Islamic group blamed of setting up fake roadblocks and attacking local villages to steal supplies.

Newspapers reported that the army had also successfully completed a 17-day operation to "clean up" the Ouled Allet region, south of Algiers, and 35 extremists had been killed. The operation led to the dismantling of the GIA operations centre in the town, deserted by its residents and filled with mines.

News reports said the army raids marked a turning point in the struggle against extremists and was one of the toughest defeats suffered by the GIA in the region.

They warned the popula-

tion, however, to remain "vigilant" as the struggle against the rebels was not over and armed groups could quickly be formed.

The Matin daily said GIA members had infiltrated the capital where they rented apartments and were preparing to launch attacks.

"Dormant networks have been set up in the capital and are waiting for the right time to attack," the paper said. "Citizens have noted the presence of armed people in some neighbourhoods of the capital."

Islamists have been fighting to overthrow the military-backed government since the cancellation in January 1992 of elections the Islamists were poised to win.

According to human rights groups, 80,000 people have been slain since the Islamist revolt began.



REMINISCING SUPERSONIC: Retired Air Force General Chuck Yeager answers questions from the media, during a press conference honouring the 50th anniversary of his first supersonic flight, Tuesday at Edwards Air Force Base, California. Gen. Yeager broke the sound barrier in 1949 in a Bell X-1 aircraft similar to the one behind him, nicknamed 'Glamorous Glennis' (Reuters photo)

Turkey's military chief says Cyprus no cause for concern

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's powerful military chief said in comments published on Wednesday that concern about a possible clash between Turkish and Greek forces over Cyprus was unfounded.

"We are dealing with the problem responsibly and in a cold-blooded manner. There is no cause for concern," the Sabah daily quoted Turkey's top General Ismail Hakkı Karadayi as saying.

Tension between traditional rivals Turkey and

Greece has risen in recent days. Athens has accused Turkish warplanes of violating Greek and Cypriot airspace to disrupt joint military exercises on the divided Mediterranean island. Ankara denies the charges.

Gen. Karadayi said Turkey did not need to pick a fight with Greece because Ankara's numerical military superiority would make the result of any conflict a foregone conclusion.

"Any soldier can see the reality of the balance of power. The Turkish army's

overwhelming superiority is obvious. That's why I wouldn't even bother arm wrestling with them," he said. Sabah's rival daily Hurriyet carried the same quotes.

Turkey has the second-largest number of troops in NATO and a larger array of weaponry than Greece.

The United States called on Tuesday on the two countries to reinstate their ban on military flights over Cyprus.

State Department spokesman James Rubin

said Washington had strongly backed separate announcements on May 9 by both Greece and Turkey that they would stop military overflights of Cyprus.

"Clearly, overflights have now resumed," Mr. Rubin told a news briefing.

But we would certainly hope and urge that all sides appreciate the benefits of reinstituting a complete, open-ended moratorium on overflights of Cyprus by Greek and Turkish military aircraft at the earliest possible time," he said.

Netanyahu commits to legislation encoding Orthodox dominance

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — facing threats by Orthodox legislators to topple the government — agreed Tuesday to back legislation that would block recognition of Reform and Conservative Judaism in Israel.

Such legislation would split world Jewry and alienate American Jews, including some of Mr. Netanyahu's most powerful supporters. The Reform and Conservative streams — though only 20,000 strong in Israel — are prevalent among U.S. Jews.

Legislation encoding Orthodox dominance "will be seen by American Jews as delegitimising their Jewish identity," said Rabbi Uri Regev, head of the Reform Movement in Israel.

The growing political assertiveness of the Orthodox — they control 23 seats in Mr. Netanyahu's 66-member coalition and could topple him easily — has already prompted some American Jews to shift their donations from Israel to Jewish causes at home.

Since the founding of Israel, the Orthodox have had a monopoly over official religious affairs. Only Orthodox rabbis sit on local religious councils and perform marriages and conversions and grant divorces.

The Reform Movement in Israel has tried in recent years to challenge the Orthodox monopoly in court. In response, the Orthodox have pushed the government to

pass legislation that would formally deprive the Reform and Conservative streams of recognition.

In June 1996, Mr. Netanyahu promised the Orthodox in a coalition agreement that his government would pass legislation affirming that only Orthodox rabbis can perform conversions in Israel.

Reform and Conservative conversions performed abroad are recognised in Israel, and followers of both streams have no trouble claiming their right to automatic citizenship in Israel.

A year after the government was formed, parliament passed a conversion bill in the first of three readings. Trying to prevent an inevitable showdown with American Jews, Mr. Netanyahu got both sides to agree to a timeout while a committee headed by Finance Minister Yashkov Neeman, an observant Orthodox Jew, sought a compromise.

On Monday, Orthodox rabbis rang alarm bells after leaks from the committee suggested that Mr. Neeman would propose setting up a conversion institute with representatives from all three streams.

The three Orthodox parties are also troubled by a supreme court case — to be decided on Oct. 29 — on whether Reform and Conservative representatives can sit on religious councils which provide various religious services. The court is expected to rule against the Orthodox.

Going into a meeting with Mr. Netanyahu on Tuesday,

six Orthodox legislators from the three parties said they would topple the government unless the prime minister got the conversion bill and new legislation on the religious councils passed by November. In the huddle, the prime minister promised to submit a bill already in the first week of parliament's winter session — which kicks off Oct. 27 — to maintain Orthodox dominance in religious councils.

Shaul Yahalom, a legislator from the National Religious Party, said the proposed bill would likely require any member of a religious council to pledge allegiance to the chief rabbinate — a condition unacceptable to the Reform and Conservative movements.

Mr. Netanyahu also pledged to get the conversion bill passed if Mr. Neeman's committee didn't reach an acceptable compromise by mid-November, said Bobby Brown, Mr. Netanyahu's adviser on diaspora affairs. While the committee is working, the conversion bill will be prepared for the required second and third readings, he said.

In the meantime, Mr. Brown said, he would try to keep both sides talking in hopes of avoiding a showdown.

However, that seems increasingly unlikely. Mr. Regev, the leader of the Reform Movement, said the Orthodox are balking at any recognition given to the rival movements, making compromise impossible.

Therefore the Reform Movement will now press

ahead with its court cases and not agree to further delays. Mr. Regev said. In addition to the Oct. 29 ruling on the religious councils, the next date on the supreme court's agenda is Nov. 10 when the government will have to explain why it does not recognise conversions performed by Reform and Conservative rabbis in Israel.

Once the disputes are back in court, Mr. Brown said, the government will fully back Orthodox legislation. "If the [religious] status quo is threatened by litigation, then there will be legislation," Mr. Brown told the Associated Press.

And the Orthodox reminded Mr. Netanyahu Tuesday that he has little room to manoeuvre. If the dispute is not settled quickly, "we are not going to be part of the coalition," said Mr. Yahalom.

Meanwhile, Israel's Channel 2 TV said Arieh Deri, head of the religious Shas Party, was working through back channels to win the opposition Labour Party's support for the conversion bill.

The TV said Shas' spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, would meet opposition leader Ehud Barak Friday and make clear that Labour must support the bill if it hoped for Shas' political backing in the future.

Labour has been trying to mend its troubled relations with Israel's religious minority — but if it backs the bill this would be seen by many of its supporters as a betrayal.

British minister welcomes Gilford's decision not to seek death penalty

LONDON (AFP) — British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said Wednesday that Frank Gilford's decision not to seek the death penalty against a British nurse accused of murdering his sister in Saudi Arabia was "excellent news."

But he said "this is not the end of the story."

Mr. Gilford has accepted \$1.24 million as compensation for his sister Yvonne's death, but insisted from his home in Australia that it was not "blood money"

which he is entitled to under Saudi law.

No sentence has yet been pronounced on Deborah Parry, accused of murdering Yvonne. Another British nurse, Lucille McLauchlan, has been convicted as an accessory to murder and sentenced to eight years jail and 500 lashes.

Mr. Cook told independent television that Mr. Gilford's decision was "excellent news. It removes the threat of beheading, that will be immensely valuable

news to both the nurses in jail, and also a great relief to their families."

He said the British government would press on with its efforts to persuade Saudi Arabia not to inflict the flogging to which McLauchlan has been sentenced.

Britain's objective, he recalled, was to "try to achieve an outcome in which neither nurse was beheaded, and neither nurse was flogged in public. "We are now half way there and

we will now be looking at how we can achieve both those objectives."

Mr. Cook acknowledged that the Saudis would be resistant to efforts to interfere with their legal processes.

But he added: "There are still processes of appeal to be gone through, and this decision today by Frank Gilford ... does give U.S. the basis for strengthening that appeal."



NY gets tough on noise

NEW YORK (R) — It's going to get a little easier to sleep in the city that never sleeps. The New York city council has passed a tough law to fight noise, including much steeper fines for repeat offenders of the city's anti-noise laws. Under the new law, a third-time offender will pay up to \$525 for a barking dog, \$1,050 for a loud television or stereo, \$2,100 for a car alarm that runs unchecked for longer than three minutes and \$2,625 for honking a car horn. Those fines are three times as high as they are under the city's current anti-noise laws. "Residents of this city are under assault," said Councilman Gifford Miller of Manhattan, who sponsored the bill. "New York City will never be a sleepy little town, and New Yorkers are never going to be listening to crickets at night," he said. "We're just trying to make it a little saner."

Monaco's Albert enters the world of cinema

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Monaco's Prince Albert, son of the late Hollywood actress Grace Kelly, will appear in his first movie role as an 1840s Irish soldier named James Kelly. USA Today daily said. "I have never done this before. I wish my mother could see me now," the young prince said. The movie, "One Man's Hero," will be shot in Mexico and is about an Irish Brigade that fought against the U.S. in the Mexican-American war. The prince's screen credit will be in his family name, Albert Grimaldi.

McCartney's 'Standing Stone' premiered

LONDON (AFP) — Former Beatle Paul McCartney's latest foray into classical music "Standing Stone" was premiered here Tuesday and greeted with rapturous applause. "It was fantastic," said Phillip Brown, a 25-year-old Londoner, after the sell-out concert in London's cavernous Royal Albert Hall. "I love everything Paul McCartney does and I think it's great that he's experimenting in other things than rock and roll." The mammoth 75-minute score, requiring the services of the London Symphony Orchestra and a chorus of 300, was trashed by some critics before the first note was heard in public.

Morton's biography of Diana is year's best-seller within a week

LONDON (AFP) — The controversial biography of Diana, Princess of Wales, by Andrew Morton has become the top selling book in Britain this year in just a week, industry book sales monitoring sources said Tuesday. His biography, an updated version of a first book which appeared in 1992, quotes Diana directly, as Morton says she recorded answers to his questions over a series of six interviews and sent them to him by cassette. Richard Knight, of the monitoring body, said the biography had sold more than 45,000 books in one week. "This is a truly phenomenal total," he said. Earlier editions of "Diana, Her True Story," contained "only sources close to her," he said, but did not want to be accused by Buckingham Palace of revealing intimate details of her life and marriage.

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